Commentary
January 2001

Republican Nation, Democratic Nation?

Terry Teachout

with a comment by Gertrude Himmelfarb

Computers and the Pursuit of Happiness
David Gelernter

The Last Time I Saw London
Norman Podhoretz

Where'd He Go, Joe DiMaggio?
Joseph Epstein

My Jeremiah
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The Journalists & the Palestinians
Fiamma Nirenstein

Art by the Yard
Steven C. Munson

CONTROVERSY

Holocaust Reparations
Gabriel Schoenfeld & Critics

Books in Review
Midge Decter • Richard Pipes • Jacob Heilbrunn
Andrew J. Bacevich • Claudia Winkler

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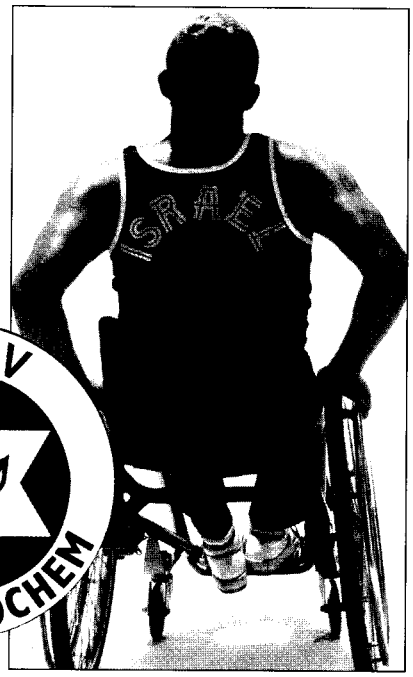

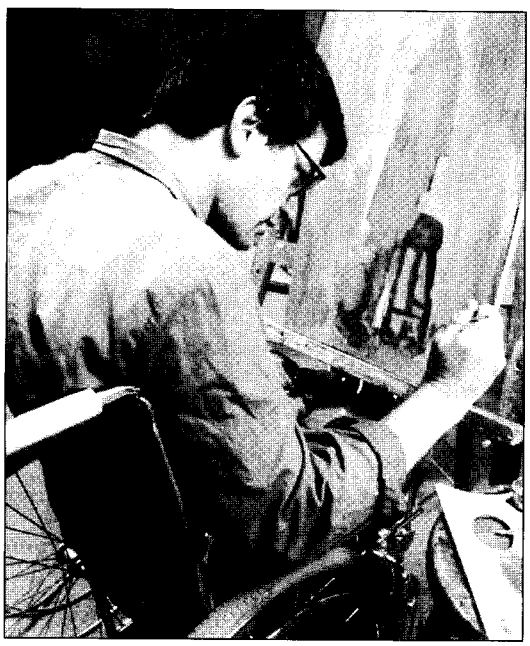

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Commentary
January 2001

Letters from Readers

The Future Danger

To the Editor:

In their article, "Peace for Our Time?" [September 2000], Donald Kagan and Frederick W. Kagan take one special historical case—Britain's appeasement of European fascism in the interwar period—and attempt to apply its lessons to the position of the United States today. Such analogies are well and good, but we must pick the one most applicable to the case at hand.

Let us look more objectively at the current threats to the U.S. identified by the authors. Consider North Korea. It is inconceivable that this nation, which cannot feed its own people and whose social structure has been distorted by a half-century of Communism, could field an effective military force. The armed forces of South Korea, let alone of the United States, could easily win a conflict on the peninsula.

As for Saddam Hussein, yes, he is still in power in Iraq, but so what? He has been contained, and the oil has been flowing nicely. Russia, meanwhile, is a military pygmy that cannot even put down a two-bit rebellion in Chechnya. With regard to China, why should we expect its authoritarian regime to last? Even if it does, it is a far greater threat to Russia and Japan than to the United States. With a billion people rapidly depleting China's natural resources, especially water, it is not far-fetched to see China looking covetously at a weakened Russia's Asian possessions.

The point is that no foreseeable situation suggests a global threat to the political integrity or economic well-being of the United States, or to democracy in general. So what, given this situation, should our foreign policy be?

Instead of choosing the period after World War I, the authors should have taken their analogy from the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars. With no other great power to confront, and with unparalleled prosperity at home, the Britain of that era adopted a policy of "splendid isolation." As one foreign secretary put it, "Britain has no permanent allies, and no permanent enemies, only interests."

What can we learn from this example? First, isolation does not mean isolationism. Like Britain in the 19th century, the U.S. should intervene appropriately, even militarily, when our national interests are at stake. The Crimean war was an example of Britain's acting in such a manner. Additionally, we should remain involved in the United Nations, using our influence and our wealth to defend our ideals and our interests. None of this, however, requires a system of permanent military alliances. Thus, our commitments to our old cold-war allies should be gradually reduced—to the point of eventually abolishing NATO and withdrawing all American troops from Europe and Japan.

In order to pursue such a strategy, the U.S. will need to maintain a reasonable nuclear deterrent, but in terms of conventional forces our primary need, like Britain in the 19th century, will be a navy capable of defeating any possible combination of forces ranged against it. We will have no need at all for massive ground forces; rather, they should be small, professional, and equipped for short, violent incursions against lesser-armed foes. This also means a force that maximizes firepower and minimizes casualties since, without a threat to our political integrity, large combat losses will be impossible to justify to the American public. Certainly peacekeeping operations that drain the readiness and availability of this small, professional force should be avoided at all costs.

Jeffrey Greenhut
Rockville, Maryland

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TO THE EDITOR:

Donald Kagan and Frederick W. Kagan provide a well-reasoned, scholarly overview of the similarities between Britain before the Munich pact of 1938 and the United States since the end of the cold war. But for all their criticism of our current military readiness, it is not clear that in recent years America has spoken too softly or carried too small a stick.

Before we change our current policies, it is worth asking where the next threat to the U.S. might arise. China is unlikely to entertain a project of world conquest. With the exception of Taiwan, its aims of expansion seem financial rather than territorial. And even in the case of Taiwan, American commitments to the island's defense would be more than enough to force a degree of diffidence on any Chinese officers contemplating military adventure.

Terrorism, whether Arab or North Korean, is another threat to consider, but here strong military capability is also of limited use. And while terrorists can cause grave damage, they do not pose a real danger to our territorial integrity or national security.

The only region that might conceivably threaten the U.S. because of its combination of technological capability, nationalism, and will to war is Europe. In the short 200 years of our history, we have been to war twice against England, once against France, once against Spain, twice against Germany, Austria, and Italy, once against Yugoslavia, and several times against Russia—from the armed landing at Vladivostok ordered by President Wilson in 1918 to the more recent wars by proxy in Korea, Vietnam, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Even the war with Iraq can be seen as war against a Russian (i.e., Soviet) outpost.

In response to the threat from Europe, and despite visceral anti-American sentiment there, we have relentlessly promoted alliances with the Europeans. Faithful to Britain's prewar strategy of not allowing a single European power to dominate the continent, we have encouraged European unity, expanded NATO, and continued to maintain a military force in place as a continuing reminder of our strength.

WALTER SCHIMMERLING
Arlington, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

In their article, "Peace for Our Time?," Donald Kagan and Frederick W. Kagan may be too harsh in their criticism of the interwar British governments.

By 1920, the confidence and will of the British ruling class had been sapped by the loss of its best and brightest in World War I, and the working class was beset by high unemployment and a lagging economy. At Oxford, students debated and passed a resolution not to fight for king and country. Military intervention in a far-off place, or even closer to home (unless England was directly threatened), was the last thing the public was willing to contemplate.

Weariness and the public's longing for peace often induce democratic leaders to accept and even actively pursue diplomatic resolutions that are anchored more in hope than reality. Israel's actions over the last several years are a case in point.

KURT STRAUSS
Tucson, Arizona

TO THE EDITOR:

In "Peace for Our Time?," Donald Kagan and Frederick W. Kagan state that "America remained obstinately neutral" in World War II prior to Pearl Harbor. But if it were not for isolationists lobbying to

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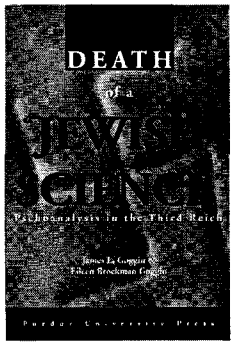

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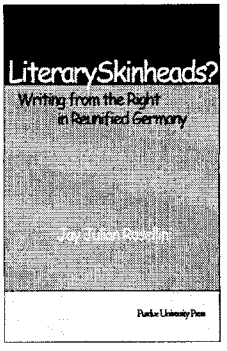

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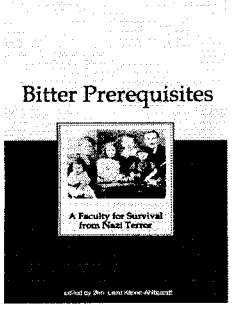

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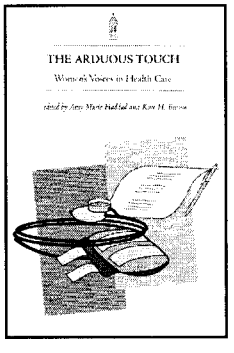

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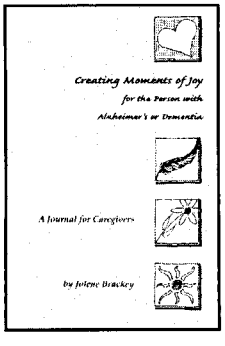

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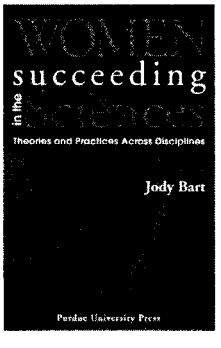

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keep America out of the European war between 1939 and 1941, the U.S. might have entered the war too soon, and without the public backing needed to prosecute it successfully. The funding required to develop the atomic bomb, for example, might have been more difficult to obtain if Germany and Japan had not declared war first.

Moreover, had isolationists not been so thoroughly demonized in the 1940's, 50's, and 60's, they might have kept us from so foolishly escalating the Vietnam war, and encouraged us to take a more neutral stance in the Middle East instead of stirring up a billion Muslims.

STAN EADS
Winton, California

DONALD KAGAN and FREDERICK W. KAGAN write:

The basic criticism made of our thesis is that there are no visible threats to American interests in existence today, or foreseeable for years to come. North Korea, it is said, is on the verge of collapse; China will either democratize or fail; Iraq has been crushed. Our call for a consistent commitment to engagement in the world in order to preserve the peace, and for an increased military capacity to carry out that commitment, is therefore unnecessary.

We are also told that, in focusing on Britain in the 1920's, we made a poor choice of historical analogy, and that we should have looked to some other period of history for a better comparison. But the analogy suggested by Jeffrey Greenhut, for example, is in fact quite wrong. After the Napoleonic wars, England joined with the other three great powers in a Quadruple Alliance to see to it that no new Napoleon would destroy the order of Europe. The period of "splendid isolation" came much later in the century, and, when the Kaiser's Germany set out on its menacing course, ceased to look so splendid.

In any case, all the arguments made by our critics convince us ever more of the rightness of our analogy, and precisely because they resonate powerfully with arguments advanced in England in the 1920's: Germany lay devastated and permanently disarmed, Russia had collapsed, Italy was harmless and weak, France was an ally, as were the U.S. and Japan—so where could the threat possibly come from, even decades down the road? Similar sentiments were voiced even by responsible military leaders as late as 1928, when the ten-year rule limiting funds for defense to a paltry figure was extended indefinitely. Others pointed to the League of Nations and the increased dependence upon global trading partners as evidence that no large-scale future war need be contemplated.

The case of Japan is especially instructive. Its rise to power and its obvious ambitions did raise appre-

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hensions in some quarters. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Conservative government from 1924 to 1929 threw as much energy into reducing expenditures on the British navy as he had into building it up when serving as First Lord of the Admiralty before World War I. To the navy's fears of a war with Japan he replied, "Why should there be a war with Japan? I do not believe there is the slightest chance of it in our lifetime." Indeed, "no naval war against a first-class navy is likely to take place in the next 20 years." The Chancellor's name was Winston Churchill.

Yet in 1929 it all collapsed. The international bubble of wealth, which had been keeping Japan passive and Germany democratic, burst. Overnight the international situation was transformed. Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931, beginning a decade-long struggle that culminated with the permanent eviction of Great Britain as a dominant power in East Asia. German democracy collapsed shortly thereafter, and Hitler led his nation onto the path of rapid and aggressive rearmament. Worst of all, the democratic states were hit hard by economic failure, and turned inward just when their overseas intervention was most needed.

Of course the threats are not readily visible today; that is our central point. If they were, America's leaders would be more likely to take steps to meet them. But confident assurances that today's international order will continue to hold indefinitely are all too familiar, and no more reliable now than they were in 1928. We must hope that America will not be seduced by these arguments for passivity and nonchalance as the British were—to their near-destruction.

Cuisine & Culture

TO THE EDITOR:

Like Steven A. Shaw ["Culinary Correctness," October 2000], I reject deconstruction and all that it signifies (as it were). And I agree with him that deconstruction has seeped out of the academy to infect other realms of American life. But when it comes to the matter of Alain Ducasse New York (ADNY), Mr. Shaw and I differ, as his delightful essay makes clear.

The spirit of deconstruction, I propose, dwells not in the minds of restaurant critics, but in Mr. Ducasse's kitchen. As I understand it, deconstruction seeks to void meaningful frames of reference and, ultimately, deny the legitimacy of "bourgeois" values—truth and beauty among them. Although I doubt he had any political agenda in mind, Mr. Ducasse has accomplished that by serving mediocre French food while insisting—by the simple mechanism of flagrant overpricing—that it is excellent.

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Restaurant criticism comes down to this: one of us liked the fish, and the other did not. A restaurant, in the final analysis, sells not a meal but a memory. Mr. Shaw has his memories of ADNY, and I have mine. That is what makes restaurants more fun to fight over than politics.

STEVE CUOZZO
New York Post
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Steven A. Shaw's "Culinary Correctness" is entertainingly anti-establishment, but in his eagerness to defend chef Alain Ducasse, he slights some of the valid points made against Ducasse's New York restaurant and offers some exaggerated statements about cuisine and criticism.

First, he says, "There is little debate that Alain Ducasse is, in fact, the world's greatest chef." It is hard to believe that this can be true in the competitive world of French cooking. Mr. Shaw's evidence is that Ducasse is the only chef to have two three-star restaurants, but this is not necessarily proof of absolute eminence. Many great chefs do not strive to operate more than one restaurant.

Second, Mr. Shaw disagrees with critics who chide Ducasse for being absent from his own kitchen. Mr. Shaw counters that chefs are not cooks, but executives. It is true that chefs do not cook, but they do strive to guarantee that every plate leaving the kitchen is superb. Given the nature of New York dining, there is no way for a chef to maintain consistency without being present a good deal of the time. This is especially important in a new restaurant, as is suggested by Mr. Shaw's concession that "the ADNY kitchen has produced a few duds."

Third, Mr. Shaw is right to note that top French restaurants are quite unstuffy, but he is wrong to align some of ADNY's practices that critics have labeled "vulgar" with the casualness of three-star French restaurants. The use of purse stools and multiple pens for signing the bill is showy in a way that frequenters of Paris establishments like Le Grand Vefour, La Côte St. Jacques, and Taillevent would find downright silly.

Finally, Mr. Shaw's analogy between the deterioration of university English departments and the leveling tendency in today's food criticism is about ten years out of date. The rise of mass-culture studies in the former was a regrettable development, but most departments have abandoned that project and returned to teaching the classics.

MARK BAUERLEIN
Atlanta, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR:

I was disappointed with "Culinary Correctness" by Steven A. Shaw. For years Alain Ducasse was the darling of the media, and now they have finally turned on him. Mr. Shaw argues that the "spirit of deconstruction" together with a display of "egalitarian fervor" and some "good old-fashioned Francophobia" are responsible for the poor reviews of ADNY. The fact is, howev-

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er, that the restaurant is very pricey and the reviewers determined that it was not worth it. There is no cultural conspiracy here.

PHILIP J. SCHILLER
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

Steven A. Shaw may well be correct in asserting that "in the days when the late Craig Claiborne was at the *Times*, restaurant reviewers were culled from the ranks of trained culinary professionals and self-educated gourmets," whereas "today, they are more likely to be journalists doing a job." But I must admit to facing this particular manifestation of our cultural decline with composure. There is little enough worth reading in contemporary journalism, even in COMMENTARY. Please do not waste readers' time with such trivial and distasteful articles.

MICHAEL YOUNG
Albany, New York

STEVEN A. SHAW writes:

Steve Cuozzo playfully suggests that if a restaurant is mediocre and overpriced, its chef must be a deconstructionist. As much as I would like to blame all the world's ills on deconstruction, I fear it is not so simple. What I take serious issue with is the claim that Alain Ducasse New York serves mediocre food. Although that is certainly what many reviewers have said, a careful reading reveals that their criticism of ADNY's cuisine has been mostly in the nature of a self-fulfilling afterthought, tacked on to validate a conclusion reached on grounds—the pens, the prices, Ducasse's absence and/or alleged arrogance—unrelated to gastronomy and often, in my view, having to do with a species of cultural politics. In that connection I note with some amusement Mr. Cuozzo's own lame conclusion that, in matters of taste, there is no dispute.

In response to Mark Bauerlein, I certainly would not claim that Ducasse is the world's greatest chef *because* of his Michelin stars; if anything, the converse is true. But in any case it would be hard to imagine such a sustained media outcry against, say, the world's fourth-greatest chef. As for my noting that the ADNY kitchen has produced a few duds, that is true of new restaurants in general. Compared with any other two-week-old restaurant, even one with a live-in chef, ADNY's triumphs stand in even greater relief—and to visit the restaurant today is more remarkable still. Finally, it is nice to hear that the universities are again teaching the classics, though I have my doubts about that, as well as about how exactly they are being taught.

To Philip J. Schiller, ADNY is a failure because the reviewers have said so; I am sorry that this reviewer failed to change his mind. I should mention, though, that Ducasse is no stranger to the contempt of the media, having been bloodied by the French food press when he first made his run for simultaneous three-star ratings. Luckily, in France, taste buds ultimately triumphed over attitude, as I hope they will here.

All I can say to Michael Young is that I do not believe it is ever a waste of time to stand up for excellence.

Correction

TO THE EDITOR:

In my article, "Intifada II: Death of an Illusion?" (December 2000), I mistakenly identified Fouad Ajami as a Lebanese Christian. Though he does in fact come from Lebanon, he is a Shiite Muslim, not a Christian. I apologize for the error.

NORMAN PODHORETZ
New York City

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CONTROVERSY

Holocaust Reparations

Gabriel Schoenfeld & Critics

STUART EIZENSTAT:

In "Holocaust Reparations—A Growing Scandal" [September], Gabriel Schoenfeld asks the Jewish community to reconsider the usefulness and propriety of the efforts that have been made in the last few years to win compensation for survivors of the Holocaust and their families. Respectfully, I could not disagree more.

Putting aside for the moment the fact (which Mr. Schoenfeld fails to mention) that non-Jews comprise over 80 percent of the estimated 1 million slave and forced laborers who will share in the largest of the settlements that have been achieved with Germany, law, justice, and logic all come down strongly in favor of what has been done. In every developed nation on earth, the accepted method of compensating the victim when a civil wrong has been committed, a contract breached, or labor extracted under duress is through the award of money. Victims of negligent and reckless acts of all types, including radiation exposure, oil spills, medical malpractice, and smoking-related illness routinely bring lawsuits asking for money damages for themselves and for others who have suffered the same injuries.

Only those on the fringe—those who deny the Holocaust and other wrongs ever occurred—would disagree that its victims, Jews and non-Jews alike, were grievously injured, both by the Nazi government and by German private industry. The same can be said when it comes to Austrian industry and Swiss banks. Insurance policies were not honored, dormant bank accounts went unpaid, brutal labor conditions went uncompensated, "Aryanized" property was never returned.

If these injuries occurred, why should their victims not have the same right to sue for justice as victims of other and lesser catastrophes? I can conceive of only two possible reasons. The first is if they have already been compensated. For those Jews who, sensing danger in the 1930's, sent their money to Swiss banks for safekeeping, or who purchased policies from European life-insurance companies to provide for their families in case they did not survive, the failure to pay for 50 years was either a simple breach of contract or a more serious breach of trust, both of which create the right to money damages under the laws of almost all nations.

Jewish survivors have received monthly payments from the German government since 1956 (since 1991 for those living in former Iron Curtain countries), but this has been for injuries inflicted by the Hitler regime itself. Until the settlement of last July, neither they nor non-Jews living in Central Europe had been compensated for the work they performed as slave and forced laborers for German private- and public-sector companies. The companies profited from their work during World War II. Many German firms would never have been able to resume production as quickly as they did after 1945 had their production facilities not been moved to huge underground pits to protect them from Allied bombing. Those pits were dug by slave and forced laborers.

The only other rationale for surviving victims not to seek redress—and the one on which Mr. Schoenfeld lays great stress—is, in essence, because they are Jews. Polish Cath-

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olics who worked in a Nazi munitions factory under terrible conditions, he implies, should be repaid for their forced labor, but the Jews who worked beside them should not. Why not? Because it is crass, unseemly—in short "bad for the Jews," as the phrase goes—to seek compensation for Holocaust injuries; because doing so exacerbates anti-Semitism by reinforcing the age-old stereotype that equates Jews with greed.

Anti-Semitism is not something that can be accurately measured in any country. Nor, sadly, is it something even the most selfless and decorous behavior on the part of Jews themselves can eliminate completely. Suffice it to say that during eighteen months of negotiation over the terms of the slave- and forced-labor settlement, public and editorial opinion in Germany, as well as the German government and all the major political parties in the German parliament, strongly supported a generous payment to the victims.

Mr. Schoenfeld cites some evidence from Switzerland and Austria to support the opposite conclusion, but here too there is overwhelming evidence on the other side. Most of the Austrian press and all four political parties, including the right-wing Freedom party, supported the recently negotiated slave- and forced-labor settlement in that country. And even if this were not so, Jews should not be deterred from seeking justice because it may cause latent anti-Semitism to rise to the surface.

In today's society, the effort to obtain compensation in the case of man-made disasters is often accompanied by actions many people consider messy and distasteful. Solicitation of plaintiffs, threats of boycotts, and exploitation by ambitious politicians are some that are alleged in Mr. Schoenfeld's article. For sure, there were unfortunate elements of this in the Swiss, German, and Austrian cases in which I have been involved. Our class-action system is virtually unique, for better or worse, in the world. When the CEO of Union Carbide arrived in Bhopal to express regrets for the chemical disaster there, he was arrested on the spot. But if Bhopal, the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, the asbestos cases, silicone-breast implants, and Bridgestone-Firestone tire defects can spawn such byproducts, what do we say about an event in which millions of people were forced to surrender their property, live and work under the cruelest of circumstances, and deliberately put to death?

We have tried to moderate the public tensions of this process by strongly opposing sanctions against German, Swiss, and Austrian firms by American state and local governments. We have urged all parties, including those involved in claims for stolen art and other property, to resolve their differences by negotiation, mediation, and arbitration instead of by lengthy, expensive lawsuits. We have succeeded in limiting attorneys' fees to a tiny fraction of the customary percentage awarded in class actions (in the German and Austrian cases, only about 1 percent of the final award) and by subjecting individual lawyers' claims for those fees to third-party arbitration.

Mr. Schoenfeld ends by expressing concern about the effect of the reparation effort upon "Jewish honor" and the security of Israel. His predictions on these matters are much too dire. Nor has the reparation effort weakened Israel's ability to purchase weapons for its legitimate defense needs from this country or others.

Survivors of the Holocaust and millions of other World War II victims have been deprived of their property and unable to pursue justice in the courts for far too long. Finally achieving this after 55 years could hardly have been expected to be an antiseptic process.

Deputy Secretary of the Treasury
Washington, D.C.

ROMAN KENT:

Gabriel Schoenfeld's article is extremely short on honesty and long on distortion. He is an excellent advocate for four entities: the Swiss, the German government, German industry, and European insurance companies. The question I pose is this: where is his interest in the well-being of the survivors of the Holocaust, the real victims? And did he think about the tens of thousands of survivors who are worse-off today than they were 50 years ago? And did he give serious thought as to why, 50 years ago, these survivors did not want to participate in making any claims, and why they did not even join the Claims Conference?

The reasons were simple. At that time the survivors were skin and bones, broken up both physically and mentally. Their first consideration was to restore their strength and to find their families and loved ones. Above all, they needed to forget the terrifying experiences they had endured. Most wanted to leave Europe and make a new life for themselves by starting families and building a future.

Today, for tens of thousands of them, these dreams have evaporated. They are old, their families are gone, and in many cases their spouses are no longer alive. They live in substandard economic conditions without enough money for prescription drugs, nursing care, or psychological help. Their loneliness, aggravated by past experiences, leaves them unable to perform everyday tasks. And with the onset of old age, the memories of life in the concentration camps are more vivid now than 50 years ago.

Mr. Schoenfeld did not need to question the health and well-being of many survivors. All he had to do was travel to the Bronx, or to the former Soviet Union, to see for himself the conditions in which many now live. Since he quotes from the *New York Times*, he could even have found some survivors on that newspaper's list of "100 Need-

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iest Cases." It seems, however, that this was too much to ask of him, since it was easier to sit, to write, and to criticize. What have he, his colleagues, and that bunch of what he calls "fee-grabbing lawyers" been doing for the past 20 or 30 years? Have they been fighting for justice and historical truth? No! The reason why nothing was done is that there was no money in it for the lawyers. As for the press, there was no sexy "glitter of gold" to sensationalize.

What is even more obscene is that Mr. Schoenfeld tries to justify the position of the Swiss, the German government and industry, and the insurance companies. Although 50 years late, we survivors, before we depart, are demanding that the historical facts regarding the role of Switzerland and its banks, and the insurance companies and industrial giants involved with profiteering during the Holocaust, be exposed and the truth be known. If, as a result of such exposure, long-overdue and token compensation is given to survivors, we deserve it. Justice demands it. History demands it.

For generations, we were taught to believe in and to trust the institutions of banking and insurance. What was recently uncovered is as shocking as it is disgraceful. No longer, despite all the so-called justifications, can Swiss banks inspire confidence—not after 86 dormant accounts become 55,000 or more; not after the bankers have demanded death certificates from the heirs of victims of concentration camps; not after safe-deposit boxes have been opened only to find that the contents have vanished. Please do not tell us that the world should not know the truth.

Similarly, when tens of thousands of insurance policies were not paid; when payments to lawful heirs were denied; when company officers knew or must have known that their records showed tens of thousands of unpaid policies, should such practices not be exposed?

As for the Dutch role in the Holocaust, Mr. Schoenfeld's lengthy explanation distorts the facts. I would like to know how the Jews of wartime Holland, 80 percent of whom were murdered, would accept his statement that "in absolute numbers of . . .Righteous Gentiles, tiny Holland outstrips all of the countries of Western and Central Europe combined."

Even if Mr. Schoenfeld's numbers are correct, they are meaningless, since they do not take into consideration the fact that the penalty for hiding a Jew in Holland was quite mild in comparison to Poland where, as Nechama Tec shows in *When Light Pierced the Darkness*, the penalty was death.

The situation is the same with the issues of slave and forced labor. The heads of the companies involved knew quite well the "death-through-work" reality prevailing in their workplaces, and present-day management knows as well. Should the history of such crimes be forever hidden and not properly documented?

The problem in all these cases is not the survivors—the real victims—but the companies, ably assisted by hungry lawyers who are fed by the press with a frenzy of sensational articles prominently quoting the attorney Edward Fagan. Here again, while Mr. Schoenfeld justly criticizes Fagan and his actions, he simultaneously elevates the firm of Cohen, Milstein, Hausfeld by citing its "boast that it has assumed the struggle for justice for Holocaust victims on a pro-bono basis." It is true that Michael Hausfeld worked on a pro-bono basis on the Swiss case, but for the last two years he has become the biggest "ambulance chaser" in the slave- and forced-labor dispute and is now demanding millions of dollars for his services. Is that how Mr. Schoenfeld checks his facts?

Let me end by disagreeing with Mr. Schoenfeld's conclusion: "The reduction of the Holocaust to a matter of dollars and cents amounts to a 'desecration' and 'too high a price to pay for a justice we will never achieve.'" This is a far cry from what we survivors believe and how we want the Holocaust to be remembered. We survivors have never talked just in terms of dollars and cents; we have spoken primarily of justice, of the sanctity of the Holocaust, and of the need for Holocaust education. Only by exposing the historical facts, and educating the next generations, can we avoid a repetition of the past.

What Albert Einstein once said applies perfectly to the Holocaust: "The world is too dangerous to live in—not because of the people who do evil, but because of the people who stand by and let them." These words are my credo. There is no price too high to pay for justice. Let us never again be bystanders.

Vice President
Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany
New York City

MANFRED GERSTENFELD:

In his essay on Holocaust reparations, Mr. Schoenfeld claims, inter alia, to present a balanced picture of the Netherlands.

Perhaps he would also care to balance the following wartime facts: that the Dutch supreme court of justice, appointed by the prewar democratic government, decided that the expulsions of Jews from Dutch society ordered by the Germans were not against the Dutch constitution; that Adolf Eichmann specifically said of the Netherlands, "The transports run so smoothly that it is a pleasure to see"; and that the German-appointed police commanders in Amsterdam reported in detail how zealous the Dutch policemen had been when arresting Jews, doing much more than their duty.

Can Mr. Schoenfeld explain why, in her many speeches over the radio to her people, the Dutch queen, in exile in London, devoted only five

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sentences in five years to the fate of the Jews; or why it took the Dutch government-in-exile one-and-a-half years after the deportations began to inquire of the Polish government-in-exile, located in the same building in London, about the fate of the Jews being deported to the east?

Perhaps Mr. Schoenfeld would also like to balance the fact that during the war the Amsterdam stock exchange approached the Germans, asking them to trade through the exchange the securities that had been looted from Dutch Jews; and the fact that, after the war, the Amsterdam stock exchange continued for many years to sabotage the restitution of securities to the dispossessed Jews, something for which it only recently apologized.

There is probably a greater discrepancy between the benign image and the harsh reality of Dutch wartime and postwar behavior than for any other country. Those Jews—and I am one of them—who were saved in the Netherlands by Righteous Gentiles are extremely grateful to these people for risking their lives on our behalf. It is painful, however, that, based on the behavior of these individuals, a worldwide myth is still being perpetuated of "the good Dutch nation."

Mr. Schoenfeld expects the World Jewish Congress to honor its "special obligation to historical truth" on the Dutch issue; he would have done well to start with his own obligations by reading the many Dutch sources on this issue before writing.

Jerusalem, Israel

MICHAEL J. BAZYLER:

As the author of a 283-page legal study entitled "Nuremberg in America: Litigating the Holocaust in United States Courts" (*University of Richmond Law Review*), I found Gabriel Schoenfeld's article most unfair. The European corporations who eagerly participated in wartime theft would be let off the hook by Mr. Schoenfeld solely because to seek the return of their stolen Jewish assets risks soiling the reputation of world Jewry. Swiss, German, Austrian, French, and even some American banks profited handsomely during World War II at the expense of Holocaust victims. The same goes for various European insurance companies who comprise today some of the world's wealthiest concerns. Allowing these entities to keep their ill-gotten gains amounts to unjust enrichment.

Forcing a wrongdoer to pay is a form of retributive justice. But there are other beneficial effects of the Holocaust-restitution movement that Mr. Schoenfeld also ignores. The litigation in the United States has compelled European governments to create various historical commissions, which have unearthed new and valuable information about the financial wrongs committed against European Jewry during the war. Private companies, against whom similar accusations have been made, are likewise putting Holocaust historians on retainer and, for the first time, opening up their wartime files for inspection. This trend by governments and corporations finally to "come clean" would not be occurring without the spotlight being shined on their activities through the lawsuits in the United States.

These suits have also led to claims being filed against Japanese corporations for their use of captured soldiers and civilians during World War II. Holocaust-restitution cases can thus serve as a template for a new era of relief to victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity—but this time without the 50-year wait for justice. Human-rights abusers are being put on notice: eventually you will be held responsible for your misdeeds.

Whittier Law School
Costa Mesa, California

GLORIA LANDY:

To me, it is simple justice to seek redress for Holocaust survivors no matter how long claims have lain dormant on account of the lack of means and strength to pursue restitution. That pursuit is not about money, it is about blood. The blood of time lost; health destroyed; dreams turned into lifetime nightmares; parents, children, homes, all destroyed.

It is therefore inconceivable to me that COMMENTARY would publish an article whose title and author I cannot bring myself to name. I prefer both to fade away into the oblivion they deserve. My first inclination upon reading the article was to cancel my subscription. My second, however, was to wait and give the magazine the opportunity to make up somehow for this horrible and inexcusable error of editorial judgment.

Rumson, New Jersey

ANGELO M. CODEVILLA:

In his excellent "Holocaust Reparations—A Growing Scandal," Gabriel Schoenfeld takes issue with my book, *Between the Alps and a Hard Place*, writing that there can be

> no blinking some of the terrible things done by the Swiss, like the encouragement given to the German authorities in 1938 to stamp the passports of Jews with a "J" in order to help the Swiss border control keep out terrified refugees fleeing for their lives. Although some have denied anti-Semitism was prevalent in Switzerland in this period, and Codevilla goes so far as to say that no Swiss officials wanted to put their names on "a policy of exclusion of Jews per se," a profusion of easily obtainable documents belies such apologetics.

In fact, my book refers to the "easily available documents" mentioned by Mr. Schoenfeld. In its March 1938 memo to Swiss consulates, the foreign ministry's political department specifically men-

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tioned that henceforth Swiss policy would be to admit only those Jews who had reasonable prospects of moving on. In a host of later memos, the Swiss begged the Reich foreign ministry to do something to cut the flow of migrants bereft of such prospects, some 4,600 of whom had entered Switzerland in July and August alone. The Reich was creating a huge human tragedy, and dumping it on a small neighbor. The Reich's response was the "J" stamp.

The documents show the Swiss officials' rationale for what they were doing: the standard economic foolishness of the time, that jobs are inherently limited and hence that people are burdens instead of assets. Then there was the hoary fiction (which endures to this day) that those fleeing the murderous, totalitarian regime in Germany were merely "economic refugees." Hypocrisy is the debt that vice pays to virtue. Even the worst instigator of measures to exclude Jews, the Swiss official Heinrich Rothmund, wrote his decisions in such a manner as to deflect possible accusations of anti-Semitism. That is because anti-Semitism was indeed out of fashion, not just in polite society but also in the army, the churches, and among the countless Swiss individuals who set aside their tradition of abiding the law to shelter refugees whose numbers will never be known. Swiss civil society ultimately trumped Swiss officialdom on this and other important issues relating to the war.

Finally, COMMENTARY knows better than to associate my name, however tenuously, with "apologetics" for anything or anyone.

Boston University
Boston, Massachusetts

WERNER COHN:

There is another side to the subject addressed in Gabriel Schoenfeld's otherwise thoughtful article.

First, Jews were victims in a historically unique way, and I would put more emphasis on that than does Mr. Schoenfeld. Second, there remain significant pockets of skullduggery and bad faith in the German elite, despite all the tremendous efforts by the German government to the contrary.

The story of the Berlin Zoo illustrates the attitudes that pervade quite a number of German enterprises. This zoo, since its inception in the middle of the 19th century, had private stockholders whose main privilege was free admission. A substantial proportion of these stockholders, perhaps as many as half, were Jews. My father was among them.

In November 1938 the Nazi government forbade Jews to enter the zoo grounds. In December, Jews were no longer allowed to own stock in German enterprises. After the war the surviving Jewish stockholders were informed that their shares had been "sold." When I suggested that my family's stock must have been expropriated illegally, the zoo's lawyer sent me a letter stating that our stock had been "sold" voluntarily and under "no pressure, no compulsion, no duress." Furthermore, the zoo had never cared about the religious faith of its stockholders, not even during the Nazi period. There was never any sort of discrimination on its grounds.

The zoo, in short, denies all. But to a German reporter who interviewed him, the director has stated that his institution is fully protected by the statute of limitations, and that he has no intention of going back to Adam and Eve.

I am sure that there are greedy Jews somewhere who need to be called to order. But I have also run into greedy, malicious, lying Germans, still in power in some pockets of an otherwise benign modern Germany.

Brooklyn, New York

[RABBI] ANDREW BAKER:

Reading Gabriel Schoenfeld's article, one might imagine that compensation to victims and the restitution of Holocaust assets can be secured only by the public commotion of class-action lawyers and the heavy-handed, high-pressure tactics of organizations like the World Jewish Congress. For outside commentators like the ADL's Abraham Foxman and syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer—and for Mr. Schoenfeld himself—this is too high a price to pay. Better, they conclude, to leave this messy, embarrassing, even "scandalous" business behind us.

But these are not our only choices.

The most successful compensation and restitution agreements of the past decade were achieved by the Jewish Claims Conference in negotiations with Germany. Conducted with a minimum of publicity and not a single class-action lawyer, they resulted in the creation of 40,000 new pensions for needy survivors and the restitution of heirless Jewish property in Eastern Germany, which has already translated into several hundred million dollars for projects to benefit Holocaust victims.

Even in the matters of the Swiss bank settlement and the German agreement to compensate former slave and forced laborers, credit may have been unfairly claimed. Surely, success was due more to the measured and determined negotiating efforts of Deputy Treasury Secretary Stuart Eizenstat than to the lawyers or the World Jewish Congress officials who dominated the headlines.

Director of European Affairs
The American Jewish Committee
Washington, D.C.

WALTER REICH:

Gabriel Schoenfeld's article highlights the obscene and brooding reality of Holocaust reparations—but the rubric of "reparations" is, in this case, horribly misleading, implying, as it does, that damage has been repaired. Not only is the

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damage beyond repair, it is beyond speech.

Does that mean that Holocaust survivors or the heirs of murdered victims should not seek to recover property that was plundered or withheld from them, or that the survivors should not be compensated in some way for their suffering, as absurdly inadequate as such compensation inevitably is? Does that mean that, because no reparations could be adequate, or because seeking or accepting reparations may sully the purity of memory, those who stole or retained property that belonged to victims should not be required to return it, and those who caused suffering should not be expected to pay for it financially?

I do not think so. Each survivor, and each heir of a victim, should be free to decide on this matter in a personal way. Some of the means that have been used in recent years to obtain such reparations may have been, as Mr. Schoenfeld argues, far less than noble, and may have caused, as he and too few others have argued, a monetary pall to fall on the zone of Shoah memory. But, as in so many other areas that are morally wrenching, there is no clarity here.

George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

SUSAN GLAZER:

Gabriel Schoenfeld is correct that Holocaust restitution projects should be examined on their merits and legitimacy. These projects have taken on mythic/redemptory implications for many individuals in the American Jewish community to whom any questioning is shocking. Critical examination is necessary, however, and I commend Mr. Schoenfeld on his boldness in approaching it.

Mr. Schoenfeld has neglected one very important issue—how the money collected from the various class-action cases and international agreements is being distributed and utilized. No one would dispute that the money should be given to the remaining victims and their heirs. But a second concern should be to provide funds for additional research and to create educational programs for teaching about the Holocaust. This would help take the focus away from the purely monetary considerations that have clouded perceptions and place it back on the issue of morality and justice.

Cambridge, Massachusetts

GARY M. OSEN:

Gabriel Schoenfeld's essentially fair and accurate article misses one important point. Holocaust-related claims have proliferated because of a myriad of factors, such as the collapse of the Soviet empire and the current enthusiasm for "victims' rights" generally. But to understand recent developments fully one must return to the Faustian bargain that the Western Allies entered into at the end of World War II.

Fearing (in my view, rightly) further Soviet aggression, they rushed to reconstitute Germany as a democratic state and Western ally. This necessarily meant making compromises on the question of de-Nazification. While certain leading Nazis were tried at Nuremberg, the vast majority of "Hitler's willing executioners"—to use Daniel Goldhagen's phrase—returned to normal life with a proverbial slap on the wrist or no punishment at all.

In the case of reparations, a similar policy was implemented. From 1945 to 1953, restitution, as well as compensation, was handled on an ad-hoc basis by local German courts supervised by the American military government. The results were, as one might expect, less than satisfactory. This was due both to the hostility of the German judiciary and to the complexities of proving any given claim. Moreover, in an effort to give the new German state breathing room, the allies formulated what became known as the "London Debt Agreement," which suspended slave-labor claims and other potential causes of action against German industry. This suspension remained in force until 1990-92 with the reunification of the two Germanys.

Mr. Schoenfeld is almost certainly right that the lawyers will proceed in their fashion, the Jewish organizations in theirs, and the targets of the present sweep of claims will continue (and sometimes rightly) to feel aggrieved. Yet without seeking to exculpate any of them, it is worth remembering that the hard bargain made to save Western Europe from the Soviets a generation ago was still worth it.

Oradell, New Jersey

RICHARD HAALBOOM:

Having been raised hearing stories about World War II from Dutch relatives and friends—stories of indescribable horror and of simple, straightforward courage by ordinary people who helped their fellow citizens hide from the clutches of Nazi officials and Dutch collaborators—I was struck by Gabriel Schoenfeld's account of how Israel Singer of the World Jewish Congress has spun the story of Dutch Jewry during the war, asserting that Holland "had the worst record in Western Europe during the Holocaust—some 80 percent of its Jewish population was murdered."

Thousands of Dutch men and women lost their lives for having hidden their fellow countrymen who happened also to be Jewish. To hide a Jew, even for one night, meant having to live in fear of betrayal for the rest of the war. Betrayal usually resulted in torture, imprisonment, and death. Most of the ordinary Dutch men and women who risked their lives by hiding Jews have not been—and have not asked to be—recognized as Righteous Gentiles by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial and research institute. They just did what they felt had to be done for fellow human beings.

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For Mr. Singer and the World Jewish Congress to speak of the Dutch war record in such an offhand and self-serving way, in testimony recorded for posterity by the U.S. Congress, is a slap in the face of all the ordinary people of the Netherlands who suffered the yoke of an occupier evil beyond comprehension.

Kitchener, Ontario
Canada

JOERG BAUMBERGER:

Gabriel Schoenfeld's article constitutes a long-awaited response of reason to the ill-begotten reparations campaign unleashed in the 1990's by a vocal part of American Jewry against European institutions whose bad luck it was to be the legal successors of institutions in existence during the troubled 30's and 40's. Regrettably, this response might well be coming too late. By now, the self-appointed leaders of the Jewish cause such as Israel Singer, Edgar Bronfman, Avraham Burg, and a handful of Jewish lawyers are, for better or worse (in Switzerland definitely for worse), widely perceived as the true and only representatives of the Jewish community. Likewise, the U.S. government and media have successfully conveyed the impression of subscribing to the same biased historiography and the same otherworldly moral standards that have been championed by the proponents of belated reparations and transnational moral reeducation.

The United States, no doubt, is the most benign imperial power the world has seen so far. Still, it has not yet shed all the bad habits generally associated with great-power status. And the Jewish organizations could also play a more beneficial role if they abstained from what not only appears as, but actually is, aggressive profiteering. Remembrance is valuable, but their conduct is a recipe for ongoing resentment and renewal of injustice. There is such a thing as justice in remembering, and Gabriel Schoenfeld's article does an excellent job in promoting this virtue.

St. Gallen, Switzerland

ULRICH ALDAG:

As a German, born in 1930, I wholeheartedly endorse all aspects of Gabriel Schoenfeld's article. Along with Mr. Schoenfeld and others, I am most concerned lest damage be done to the healing process between Jewry and the descendants of a generation that lived when unspeakable crimes were committed. I sincerely hope that Mr. Schoenfeld's call to reason will be heard.

There must be a moral category that provides forgiving even for the seemingly unforgivable. Money cannot be substituted for forgiving. We, the current generations of Jews and Germans, need closure. Without closure, the wounds will never heal.

Portola Valley, California

YAACOV LOZOWICK:

The Claims Conference can plausibly assert that over its first several decades, it did its best to transfer as much money as possible from the perpetrators and their successors to the survivors. Can the present campaigners for restitution make any such claim? Hundreds of millions of dollars have gone to lawyers, accountants, consultants, travel agents, and hoteliers, and it is unclear how the balance might ever be redressed in favor of the survivors.

As for the pursuit of justice, let us never forget that the Shoah was the result of a decision made by the leaders of a nation—Germany—to murder an entire people; that it entailed the participation of many Germans and others, and the slaughter of millions; and that it lingers on in the pain of the survivors, bereft of their families, of their ability ever to achieve peace, of their entire world. Against that backdrop, justice is unattainable. Better not to use its name in vain.

Jerusalem, Israel

GUNTHER KARGER:

The world believes that Holocaust survivors are getting billions of dollars in reparations when in fact that is far from the truth. The recent $5.2 billion slave-labor settlement is a case in point. Less than 30 percent of the slave-labor settlement funds are targeted to Jewish causes, and from this portion a mammoth $335 million has been allocated to the Claims Conference to be distributed at its discretion for "education and Holocaust remembrance" projects.

My entire family, including my parents and aunts and uncles, were taken to a concentration camp and forced to labor as slaves until their deaths. Obviously, none of them was alive as of February 15, 1999, the deadline to qualify for payments from the slave-labor settlement. As my relatives' sole heir and as someone who was sent from foster home to orphanages before being left to fend for myself in foreign lands, I am disqualified because my parents were killed. Yet millions go to "remembrance" projects. Something seems very wrong here.

Particularly troubling is the "overflow" provision that allows funds that are left after all claims have been settled to revert to the Claims Conference and the World Jewish Congress. This means that these organizations will receive more money for their discretionary allocation if more of us die off. Delay would thus be to their benefit as Holocaust survivors are getting older and sicker.

A potential conflict of interest is inherent in this. That negotiators for a settlement can allocate to their own organizations vast sums for discretionary spending is equivalent to a corporate board's authorizing sweetheart deals for its members at the expense of the company's shareholders.

Child Holocaust Survivors
Miami, Florida

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EDWARD N. LUTTWAK:

Gabriel Schoenfeld has performed a great service, which I hope will encourage him and others to investigate and expose further the crass misconduct of institutional Shoah entrepreneurs and the unbridled profiteering of lawyers and accountants. The actual workings of current compensation arrangements are one such scandal; for example, the worthies who administer the Generali insurance company's *ex-gratia* fund for unpaid claims meet once a month and review only a handful of applications on each occasion, thus ensuring the longest possible term of service for themselves, while elderly claimants die off.

It has become an urgent task for Jewish leaders everywhere to delegitimize Holocaust profiteering in all its forms—and not only those explicitly pecuniary.

Chevy Chase, Maryland

HERMAN F. WOLF:

Gabriel Schoenfeld's article on restitution was factual and devoid of exaggeration. Fifty years have passed since the Holocaust. We have now reached a point where second- and third-tier claims are being pursued as if the parties involved can be directly tied to Holocaust-related crimes. We have sought and received redress from the primary parties—Germany and its wartime factotum Switzerland, the two countries that benefited most from the victimization of the Jews.

Today, we survivors of the Holocaust constitute fewer than 10 percent of the Holocaust's victims, who in turn constituted fully one-third of world Jewry. We cannot and should not leave behind us a situation where the remaining two-thirds suffer from our overzealous pursuit of claims arising from actions that are beyond the pale of redemption.

The Holocaust was an event that leaves its victims victimized ad infinitum regardless of what they can extract as restitution. The victimizers, too, will never shed their guilt, for the simple reason that more than 90 percent of the victimized are not in a position to be swayed by acts of contrition. Such is the enormity of the Holocaust that in the end it injures and reinjures the victims and the victimizers and everybody else half a century after the fires of the crematoriums have gone cold.

Syracuse, New York

MICHAEL KELLMAN:

Perhaps the most important point made in Gabriel Schoenfeld's article concerns the way in which the pursuit of Holocaust reparations adversely affects the security of the state of Israel. For decades, maybe centuries, to come, the Jewish state will need all the friends it can muster. Yet the hand of friendship is extended only so often, whether out of guilt and shame or true affection. As I write, the Middle East peace process is collapsing—and Holocaust lawyers have begun to pursue American companies. Bravo therefore to Gabriel Schoenfeld for an utterly courageous and timely piece. Given the venue, there is hope that it will make a difference.

Eugene, Oregon

HARRY CARASSO:

I had just closed the last page of Norman Finkelstein's book, *The Holocaust Industry*, when the September issue of COMMENTARY reached me containing Gabriel Schoenfeld's (as usual) brilliant article on Holocaust reparations. I was at first shocked by Mr. Schoenfeld's blunt dismissal of Finkelstein's work, for though I felt compelled to condemn it in my own review (published here in France in *Diasporiques*), I was nevertheless impressed by some of the book's assertions. Finkelstein is right when he says that demanding "restitution" from a country like Belarus, which has a per-capita income of $100, is a pure dream, and that such a policy will only feed the growing anti-Semitism in such places.

I was then shocked again by the way that Mr. Schoenfeld concludes by "leaving aside" the "'fee-grabbing lawyers'" who charge $640 per hour; these fellows are doing far too much moral damage to the Jewish community to let them go with just one line.

But the two shocks were quickly dimmed by the accuracy and far-reaching character of the article's contents. Most important are Mr. Schoenfeld's remarks about the possible reactions of those countries in Europe—like Germany, Switzerland, and Holland—that have been most friendly to the state of Israel, and who may reconsider their position if this strange sort of blackmail continues. This is a very wise warning, and Mr. Schoenfeld deserves praise for the courage to express it.

Paris, France

ROLAND STEPHEN:

I have only distantly followed the very complicated history of postwar reparations. However, even a remote observer is well aware of the minefield of passions that lies beneath this issue. Gabriel Schoenfeld has done a great service with his unflinching commentary. The rhetorical and moral balance of the piece are exemplary, as proof of which I predict his castigation from every direction.

North Carolina State University
Raleigh, North Carolina

BURTON S. LEVINSON:

Having been involved with the California department of insurance on the issue of Holocaust-era claims, I found Gabriel Schoenfeld's analysis to be completely accurate. He has written a very impressive and thoughtful article.

Honorary National Chairman
Anti-Defamation League
of B'nai B'rith
Beverly Hills, California

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Gabriel Schoenfeld

IN ADDITION to being the second-ranking official in the U.S. Treasury, the top public servant charged with coordinating Holocaust restitution efforts in the United States, and a leading figure in the Jewish world, Stuart Eizenstat is also a renowned attorney. Given his formidable credentials, his letter deserves to be taken seriously—though it is a mystery to me how someone with his reputation for intelligence and integrity could so thoroughly misconstrue the straightforward meaning of what I wrote.

Mr. Eizenstat's response is based entirely upon the premise that I oppose Holocaust restitution. Whether this mischaracterization is deliberate or inadvertent I do not know, but let me say for the record that I am not now and never have been opposed to restitution for any and all victims of the Nazis; nor is there a word in my article to suggest otherwise. In my plainly stated view, David Ben-Gurion was right when he decided in 1952 to accept reparations payments from Germany to help build the Jewish state, and individual victims of the Holocaust and their heirs around the world also have every right to demand compensation for that which was stolen from them, as well as for having been enslaved, maimed, and murdered. I do not believe there should be a statute of limitations for redressing crimes of such magnitude.

At the same time, to repeat what I wrote in COMMENTARY, I am concerned that the restitution effort being conducted by the Jewish community go forward with consideration for the legitimacy of individual claims; with punctilious regard for historical truth; and with attention paid to how Holocaust restitution affects other pressing Jewish interests, foremost among them the well-being and security of the state of Israel. In my article, I presented evidence that each of these conditions has been seriously violated.

If Mr. Eizenstat had read my article with a minimum of care, he would have discovered that I unequivocally reject the arguments he ascribes to me, beginning with the "great stress" I allegedly lay on the dangers of Holocaust restitution because it "exacerbates anti-Semitism," and ending with my "implied" advocacy of payments to "Polish Catholics who worked in Nazi munitions factories" while simultaneously opposing compensation for "the Jews who worked beside them."

Though I did point to a new mood of anti-Semitism in Europe, and though I traced this mood in part to the way Holocaust claims have been pursued in recent years, I expressed explicit agreement with the assertion of Richard Cohen of the *Washington Post* that if the demands of Jewish organizations have exacerbated anti-Semitism in places like Switzerland, then it is the Swiss who "ought to look to their own values and not the Jews to theirs." If Holocaust claims are legitimate, I added, "it would be a double injustice to forgo them out of fear of arousing anti-Semitism." As for Polish Catholics, I certainly never advocated that they (or anyone else) be compensated while Jews are not. Indeed, I said not a word about Polish Catholics in my article.

Such brash misrepresentations aside, Mr. Eizenstat's letter itself suggests that he has been struggling with some of the very same problems that he reproves me for calling attention to. Thus, he acknowledges that in the Swiss, German, and Austrian cases there were ill-considered "threats of boycott" by Jewish organizations, "exploitation [of the issue] by ambitious politicians," and other forms of behavior that "many people consider messy and distasteful." He reports also that he has used his office to "moderate the public tensions" in part by opposing "sanctions" against European corporations as well as by working to avert "lengthy, expensive lawsuits."

I wish him every success in these endeavors, but his letter makes me doubt his fitness for the task. While quarreling with me over things I never said, he remains volubly silent on the single specific criticism that I leveled directly at him for his "armchair moralizing" about Swiss wartime neutrality. As for his false and wholly gratuitous comparison of Jewish victims of the Holocaust with victims of cigarette smoke, medical malpractice, defective tires, and even silicone breast-implants—well, this makes me doubt his fitness all the more.

ROMAN KENT'S is the sole response from a representative of the Jewish organizations whose actions I criticized. Though his rhetorical thunderbolts are mighty—my article, he says, is "extremely short on honesty and long on distortion," and my supposed advocacy for the Swiss, the Germans, and European insurance companies is nothing short of "obscene"—I could identify only three real issues of contention between us, and not one of them touches on the primary substance of my article or even remotely challenges its central claims.

First, Mr. Kent offers a lengthy disquisition on the health of Holocaust survivors today. But his bleak portrait supports my case, not his. In my article, I asked:

> Can it really be that, at the very moment when American Jewry has been investing millions of dollars in the construction of Holocaust museums and memorials in every city and suburb of the United States, and when hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent digging through European banking archives, these suffering souls have been kept waiting for Swiss and German money to materialize?

The answer—to judge by what Mr. Kent reports in his letter—is yes, the survivors have been kept waiting. Indeed, according to the most recent statement I could obtain, as of December 31, 1998 the

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Claims Conference was sitting on investments worth $235 million, a sum that does not include an estimated $134 million that it expects to reap from the sale of property that has fallen to its care. The presence of Holocaust survivors living in poverty amidst the most affluent Jewish community in the world is a blot upon us all, and on none more than the Claims Conference.

Next, according to Mr. Kent, I neglected to inform readers that the attorney Michael Hausfeld, whom I described as working on the Swiss-bank settlement on a pro-bono basis, has been running up a tab in the German slave-labor cases. I confess I was unaware of this fact. But that one more attorney should be reaping profits from the Holocaust is not exactly a shattering revelation; rather, it adds only another small brushstroke to the portrait I painted of law firms scrambling to sign up Holocaust victims, once again buttressing my position, not Mr. Kent's.

Finally there is Holland, a subject that has elicited an indignant and much fuller letter from Manfred Gerstenfeld. Let me briefly address that letter before returning to Roman Kent. Although I do not read Dutch, there is no shortage of excellent studies on the Netherlands either in translation or in languages other than Dutch. None of the facts presented by Mr. Gerstenfeld was therefore unfamiliar to me, and none of them contradicts a word of what I wrote.

Thus, I myself noted the "indisputable" fact that, "in percentage terms, more Jews perished in Holland than anywhere else in Western Europe"; that "there was extensive collaboration in the roundups and deportations of the Jews to the death camps, particularly by the Dutch police and the civil service"; and that in the aftermath of the war, the Dutch "were often as callous as they could be to the relative handful of Jews who returned alive." Mr. Gerstenfeld's litany of Dutch misdeeds only supplies the particulars to fill out these general statements. Though he sneers at me for attempting to be "balanced," what I was after was fairness and accuracy.

These are qualities, I am sorry to say, in which he himself falls short. Shaking an accusing finger, he complains "that a worldwide myth is still being perpetuated of 'the good Dutch nation.'" Though he puts the words "the good Dutch nation" in quotation marks, I never employed that phrase. What I did write was that the "good *Dutchman*" (emphasis added) is "not simply a myth to be torn away." I gladly stand by the proposition that there was a disproportionately high number of good Dutchmen.

I concur with Mr. Gerstenfeld's statement "that there is probably a greater discrepancy between the benign image and the harsh reality of Dutch wartime and postwar behavior than for any other country." Yet it is one thing to attempt to bring image and reality into accord and a different thing entirely to substitute one false image for another. That is precisely what the World Jewish Congress and some of its affiliates have been doing as they blacken Holland's name in their effort to wrest concessions from Dutch insurance companies.

A vivid example of the latter is on display in the letter from Roman Kent, to which I now revert. Mr. Kent writes that the figures I provided about the strikingly large number of Righteous Gentiles who gave shelter to Jews in Holland are "meaningless" because "the penalty for hiding a Jew in Holland was quite mild in comparison to Poland, where . . . the penalty was death." But this, in addition to slurring the Dutch men and women who risked their lives on behalf of their Jewish countrymen, is an invention. Any number of memoirs and standard histories make clear (and my correspondents Manfred Gerstenfeld and Richard Haalboom both corroborate) that the sanction imposed by the Nazis for giving shelter to Jews was the same in Holland as in Poland, namely, death, with the only difference being that in Poland it was most often immediate, while in Holland it typically followed a period of confinement and torture in a concentration camp.

MICHAEL J. BAZYLER, who finds my article "most unfair," seems to suffer from the Eizenstat syndrome when it comes to getting an argument straight. I am not for letting European corporations "off the hook" or for allowing them to "keep ill-gotten gains"; nor is Mr. Bazyler able to cite a single passage in my article leading to that conclusion. His own defense of Holocaust class-action suits—they have put "human-rights abusers . . . on notice" that they will be "held responsible for their misdeeds"—reveals a law professor running away with the grandeur of his ideas. Somehow one doubts that tyrants around the world are trembling in their boots at the thought of being called to account by American courts that have been treating the Holocaust as a patronage mill. Nor are the "fee-grabbing" class-action lawyers likely to exercise much of a deterrent effect on the minds of aspiring war criminals. Even Stuart Eizenstat, as he reports in his letter, has been working hard to keep the Holocaust out of the courts.

Gloria Landy's letter is an excellent example of how passions can distort understanding. Let me just point out that more than a few well-informed correspondents, including Herman F. Wolf and Gunther Karger who experienced the Nazi horror firsthand, have clearly come to rather different conclusions about what my article says and the spirit in which it was written. Two other such well-informed correspondents are Walter Reich, the former director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, who laments that there have been "too few" voices like mine criticizing the

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"less than noble" form in which Holocaust reparations are being sought, and Burton S. Levinson, the honorary national chairman of the ADL. I can only hope that Gloria Landy reconsiders—and that she does not punish COMMENTARY for any sins committed by me.

I have read a number of books and essays by Angelo M. Codevilla over the years, always with interest and with particular admiration for his commitment to, among other causes, the security of the state of Israel. Some of his statements in his book on Switzerland therefore came to me as a genuine shock. Though Mr. Codevilla defends himself here from the charge that he engaged in apologetics, I regret that I am not persuaded.

To take the most important instance, Mr. Codevilla has clearly read the authoritative Bergier Commission report on Switzerland's treatment of refugees during the war. But he is unwilling to state plainly its most disheartening findings. The Swiss were not merely begging the Germans to cut off the flow of "migrants," as Mr. Codevilla has it, and the Germans did not merely respond to this begging with the "J" stamp. Rather, Swiss authorities actively collaborated with the Germans; indeed, according to the Bergier Commission, the "initiative and energy that ended up leading to the discriminatory marking came from the Swiss side."

And while the Swiss official Heinrich Rothmund may on occasion have tried, as Mr. Codevilla writes, to cast his decisions "in such a manner as to deflect possible accusations of anti-Semitism," the record shows that he did not on all occasions try very hard or very successfully. In one report from 1939, Rothmund wrote, "we haven't spent 20 years fighting excessive foreign influence and especially 'Jewification' in Switzerland with everything the Police for Foreigners has at its disposal, just to have emigrants forced upon us today." From Mr. Codevilla's book, alas, one would learn nothing about the existence of such naked anti-Semitism among high Swiss officials.

SUSAN GLAZER is right to point out that I neglected the issue of how restitution funds are being, or should be, distributed. This is a huge and controversial subject in and of itself, and I could hardly have done it justice in a limited space. Let me just say here that I would question her call for more money to be directed to Holocaust studies. There appears to be an iron law that the more funds flow to a given field, the more rapidly it is in danger of becoming populated by specialists in grantsmanship and worse. This is fully evident in the recent downward spiral of Holocaust research into "gender studies" and other well-funded forms of intellectual frivolity. (For details, see my "Auschwitz and the Professors," COMMENTARY, June 1998.)

Gunther Karger poignantly raises the issue of distribution from another angle entirely. As the World Jewish Congress moves forward with its plan to create a multibillion-dollar Fund for the Jewish People with the proceeds of its various restitution campaigns, the serious questions raised by Mr. Karger will become increasingly acute, and there may be legitimate reason to fear that much of the money will be used less than wisely.

In his generous letter, Roland Stephen correctly predicts that my article would provoke "castigation from every direction." What he failed to foresee was that some of the praise sent my way might be at least as discomfiting as the criticism. Thus, writing as "a German born in 1930," Ulrich Aldag "wholeheartedly endorse[s] all aspects" of my article, and is "most concerned that damage will result to the healing process" between Jews and contemporary Germans. I have no doubt that Mr. Aldag's plea is heartfelt, but for victims of the Holocaust to speak of the need for forgiveness and closure—although few if any ever do—is one thing; for a German of his generation to do so is another matter altogether, and in my view decidedly inappropriate. Why, moreover, does Mr. Aldag refer to contemporary Germans as "the descendants of a generation that *lived* when unspeakable crimes were committed" (my emphasis)? Does he have some doubts about exactly who committed these crimes?

Before I close, I wish to take up a point raised by Harry Carasso, who questions the short shrift I gave to Norman Finkelstein's book, *The Holocaust Industry*. While I thank Mr. Carasso for the magnanimity of his letter, my answer, in brief, is that although there are a couple of sentences in the Finkelstein book that make some sense—Mr. Carasso has pointed to them—its overall thesis is not only false but lunatic.

Among other things, Finkelstein argues that Holocaust reparations are part of the same "ideological offensive" by which, in pursuit of their "corporate and class interests," American and Israeli Jews oppress American blacks, Palestinian Arabs, and others; and that Jewish organizations have been manufacturing nonexistent Holocaust survivors in their effort to augment their resources and power. These are crackpot ideas, some of them mirrored almost verbatim in the propaganda put out by neo-Nazis around the world. They would not have gained Finkelstein any attention whatsoever were it not for the fact, first, that he himself is Jewish and, second, as he repeats shamelessly at every opportunity, that he is the son of Jews who suffered in the Holocaust.

Given the intersection of Finkelstein's lineage with his bizarre ideas, it should come as no surprise that his book has been received with delight in certain right-wing quarters in Germany as well as in certain left-wing quarters in Great Britain. Here in this country, however, the book has been dismissed by almost

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all reviewers across the board. The only two exceptions I know of are the *Nation* on the Left and, distressingly, *First Things*, the conservative journal devoted to religion in public life that is edited by Richard John Neuhaus.

The *Nation* review is wholly predictable; there is no length to which that magazine will not go to denounce Israel. But the one in *First Things* (December 2000), by William D. Rubinstein, a professor at the University of Wales-Aberystwyth, is noteworthy on a number of counts. Although the reviewer is at pains to acknowledge that Finkelstein is in the grip of a "hostile obsession" with Zionism and may "fairly be termed an anti-Israel propagandist," evidently he does not judge this to be anything more than an intellectual tic, let alone a disqualification for being taken seriously as a historian. And although he finds "some of Finkelstein's attacks" in *The Holocaust Industry* to be "unjustified," mostly they strike him as perfectly on the mark. Particularly "unanswerable," according to Rubinstein, is Finkelstein's "courageous" exposure of the "greed and rapacity of Jewish organizations" like the World Jewish Congress. This organization (in Rubinstein's paraphrase) is "in effect, a pirate ship, sailing the waters, hunting for booty, and using the unique moral credibility of the Holocaust to extort fortunes from European governments."

Here Rubinstein blends a new set of toxins into the poisonous cocktail already on offer from Finkelstein. Although I myself have no brief for the men who run the World Jewish Congress, and was harshly critical of them in my article, the notion that they are driven by "greed and rapacity" would be laughable were it not for the notorious historical pedigree of such language. Indeed, Finkelstein himself seems in general to avoid such words, preferring to speak less of greed than of "Jewish racism" as well as institutional "blackmail" and "extortion," offenses committed, in his view, not so much out of the Jewish drive to accumulate capital as out of a compulsion to "justify [the] criminal policies of the Israeli state." To Finkelstein's image of Jewish "racism," then, Rubinstein adds the Shylock-derived image of Jewish cupidity.

As for the truth of the matter, as everybody knows, the head of the World Jewish Congress, Edgar Bronfman, is a billionaire, a man hardly in need of Holocaust "booty" to fund his organization's activities. If he and the WJC's ranking officials have pursued a just cause with so much zeal as to traduce it—and traduce it they have—it has been from misjudgment, heedlessness, an often breathtaking lack of circumspection, and a neglect of larger Jewish interests. These are real failings, which have had real and deeply worrisome consequences. But only those with another agenda entirely would take these failings and use them as a license to peddle hatred of the kind promoted by a whole host of fringe figures from the Holocaust denier David Irving down to Reverend Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam.

In closing, I want to thank all of my correspondents for writing, especially those who raised important issues that I failed to discuss.

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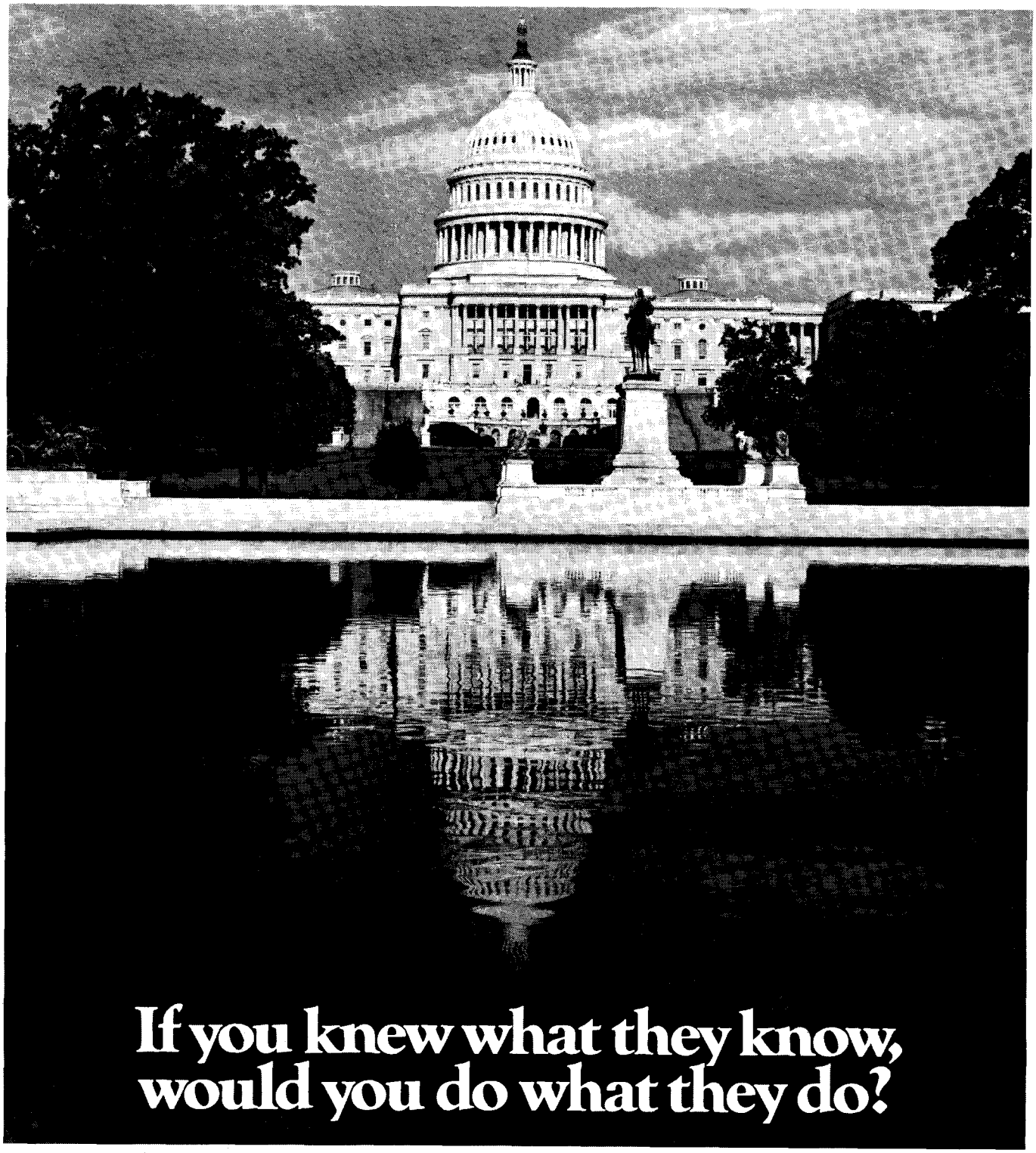

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Commentary
January 2001

Republican Nation, Democratic Nation?

Terry Teachout

On the day after the presidential election—shortly before it became clear that the race between George W. Bush and Al Gore was to be decided not at the polls but in the courts—I lunched at a restaurant on the Upper West Side of Manhattan that is popular among those who participate in what a friend of mine calls "the sacrament of brunch." As the tables in such places are invariably placed too close to each other, I ended up listening to the conversation of two gay men seated next to me, one of whom was lamenting the fact that he had just broken up with his "partner." Before long, though, they turned to discussing the presidential race—if a conversation whose participants are in complete concord can be called a discussion.

Gore, said the first man in tones of utter certainty, was "obviously more qualified" to be President than Bush. "Of course," his friend replied unhesitatingly. "Bush reminds me of those dumb rich boys I used to see all the time at Yale." It was inconceivable, they agreed, that anyone of more than modest intelligence would even momentarily have considered voting for Bush over Gore.

Such comfortable certainty has long been common among right-thinking Manhattanites. After the 1972 presidential election, Pauline Kael, then the film critic of the *New Yorker*, famously wondered how Richard Nixon could have won, since nobody she knew had voted for him. But as the much-maligned exit polls revealed on November 7, many Americans of more than modest intelligence had once again insisted on making up their own minds.

Most post-election analyses have stressed the fact that Bush and Gore split the popular vote almost evenly. Some observers believe this split was caused by the movement of both parties toward the center of the political spectrum. Thus, according to Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "there is no great ideological chasm dividing the candidates—each one has his prescription drugs plan, each one has his tax-cut program—and the country obviously thinks one would do about as well as the other." Others, taking a different tack, have criticized the two candidates for failing to galvanize the electorate. Writing in the *Weekly Standard*, David Brooks pointed to the strangling of the political process by powerful special-interest groups—what he called, borrowing the term from Jonathan Rauch, "demosclerosis." This condition, by making it all but impossible for candidates to energize voters with "idealistic calls to arms," has induced a "stagnant equilibrium" into our politics.

Viewed from another perspective, however, the 2000 election turns out not to have been close at all. Consider these exit-poll data:

- The more regularly you attend church, the more

Terry Teachout, *who writes widely on culture and the arts and is* Commentary*'s music critic, served as an editorialist for the New York* Daily News *from 1987 to 1993. He is finishing* H. L. Mencken: A Life.

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likely you were to vote for Bush. Sixty-three percent of voters who go to church more than once a week voted for him. Sixty-one percent of voters who never go to church voted for Gore.

- The much-discussed "gender gap" turns out to have been a marriage gap. Although a majority of men voted for Bush, and a majority of women for Gore, the more interesting statistic is this: Bush took the votes of 53 percent of married Americans, Gore of 57 percent of unmarried Americans.
- Of the 4 percent of voters who identify themselves as homosexual, 70 percent chose Gore.
- Of the 16 percent of voters who belong to unions, 62 percent chose Gore.
- Blacks voted nine-to-one for Gore, while 60 percent of white males voted for Bush.
- Among voters who own a gun (almost half of those polled), 61 percent voted for Bush; among those who do not own guns, 58 percent picked Gore.

Such statistics recall Gertrude Himmelfarb's assertion, in her 1999 book of that name, that postmodern America consists of "one nation, two cultures." The left-wing counterculture of the 60's and 70's, she argued, has become the dominant culture, proudly and aggressively secular, while religious believers and moral traditionalists have coalesced into a "dissident culture" that "coexists somewhat uneasily with the dominant culture."

But here is a difference: not so long ago, the members of these two cultures lived more or less in proximity, and they were also bound together by a common national ethos that sought to transcend group identities and partisan divisions. In recent years, however, the common culture has all but disintegrated, and those who once willingly took part in its rituals are separating themselves not only culturally, but physically and geographically.

Look at a national map. Except for Alaska and New Hampshire, all 29 of the states won decisively by Bush are geographically contiguous, forming a vast L-shaped curve that sweeps down from the Rocky Mountains across the Great Plains, then through the Midwest and South. By contrast, except for California and Washington, most of the states won decisively by Gore are bunched tightly around the urban and industrial centers of the Northeast and the Great Lakes.

As the presidential and congressional races demonstrated in spectacular fashion—for the House and Senate, too, emerged from the election narrowly divided—the voting populations of these two geographic entities are, taken together, almost identical in size. Yet they are very different places. On one side of the fence is an urban- and suburban-based congeries of government employees, union members, blacks, and those highly educated, comparatively affluent "knowledge workers" known to political scientists as the New Class. On the other is the contemporary equivalent of what H.L. Mencken dubbed the Bible belt—the political analyst Michael Barone calls it the "country-music belt"—in which rural and small-town America have joined forces with the fast-growing group of Americans who live in "exurbia," the new middle-class communities that are springing up beyond the rim of the older suburbs. In a widely discussed essay published in *U.S. News & World Report* shortly before the election, Barone pointed out that under Bill Clinton, Democrats had made significant gains in the "vast suburban sprawls" of America's major metropolitan areas. At the same time, he added, the "fast-growing counties beyond metro-edge cities, with [their] family-size subdivisions and megachurches," were becoming "heavily Republican."

Seen in the light of America's changing demographic makeup, then, what the recent election indicates is that Himmelfarb's "one nation, two cultures" is splintering still further, this time into two geographically and culturally distinct units—call them "Democratic Nation" and "Republican Nation"—that are competing for political control of the country as a whole.

A NATION, according to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, is "a large aggregate of people so closely associated with each other by factors such as common descent, language, culture, history, and occupation of the same territory as to be identified as a distinct people, especially when organized or potentially organizable as a political state."

The clarity and specificity of this definition are one reason why political scientists have been reluctant to use the term to describe the cultural aggregates I have called Democratic Nation and Republican Nation, much less to contend that America might be in the process of splitting into two such "nations" (especially at a time when intellectuals of a progressive bent have come to regard the very idea of "nationhood" as positively repugnant). Another, equally important reason is that those who have suggested such a thing over the past century have proved to be both hysterical and wrong.

In *The Big Money* (1936), the final volume of his fictional trilogy *USA*, the left-wing novelist John

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Dos Passos, recalling the passions aroused by the executions in 1927 of the Italian-American anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, summed up what he took to be the country's anguished mood in the phrase, "all right we are two nations." This assertion has passed into what remains of the common stock of literary reference, and is still something of a catchphrase among leftists of a certain age. But the executions of Sacco and Vanzetti failed to lead to the installation of a socialist government in Washington, much less a second American revolution. Even in the most desperate years of the Great Depression, the United States remained one nation, indivisible.

Are we still one nation, indivisible? In her book, Gertrude Himmelfarb did not minimize the seriousness of the cultural chasm she was describing. On the contrary, she was emphatic in acknowledging the profound differences between America's dominant and dissident cultures, placing special emphasis on the growing alienation of the latter—the culture, that is,

> not of the three-quarters of the public who redefine family to include "significant others" but of the one-quarter who abide by the traditional definition; not of the 55-60 percent who think that premarital sex is acceptable, but of the 40-45 percent who think it is not. Such people do not think of sexual morality as a "personal matter" that can be "boxed off," as it is now said, from the rest of life. Nor do they think of religion as a "private affair" that should not encroach upon the "public square."

Yet even so, Himmelfarb insisted, the two cultures had remained a single nation, split but not sundered. Her argument seemed convincing at the time. Why, now, think otherwise?

Once again, the most compelling reason can be seen in a glance at the electoral map. Democratic Nation and Republican Nation are, literally, two different places. In addition to being largely separate cultures, they occupy largely separate territories, and are dominated by two different parties. Moreover, each contains roughly the same number of people.

This last fact contradicts Himmelfarb's assertion that America's "dissident culture" of moral traditionalists is, numerically speaking, a minority, and one that defines itself less in its own terms than in terms of its reactionary relationship to the dominant culture. It is true that Democratic Nation controls the elite media, both entertainment and news. (According to the *Hotline*, a web-based digest of political journalism, CNN staffers had to be warned by executives on election night not to cheer when the network's anchors announced that Gore had been declared the winner of a state, lest their cheers be heard by viewers.) But despite this control, and despite the proliberal, prosecular bias that arises from it, fully half of the electorate persisted in voting for George W. Bush.

In the days and weeks following the election, the two-nations thesis was taken up by a number of commentators—all of whom, however, disparaged it. Paul Begala, a Clinton spokesman turned TV commentator, blandly dismissed Republican Nation as "vast expanses of lightly populated terrain." In a post-election commentary written for the *American Spectator*'s website, John Corry jokingly suggested that the electoral split suggests "a practical course of action: give the Democrats their own country, or countries, and we can be done with all the squabbling." Peter Applebome also treated the split lightly in a parody published in the "Week in Review" section of the Sunday *New York Times*: "Would it be inherently destabilizing," he wrote, "to have the entire pundit class in one country and all the missiles and space technology in the other?"

More seriously, Andrew Sullivan, in a piece for the *New York Times Magazine*, went so far as to claim that a look at a county-by-county map of the 2000 election disproved the two-nation idea altogether:

> What's that blue [i.e., Democratic] sliver meandering up the Mississippi? Look at the bluish enclaves in New Mexico, Wisconsin, Louisiana, and Tennessee. Check out the red inland counties of California. . . . In Bush's highest margin of victory in any state, in Wyoming, Al Gore still got well over a quarter of the vote; in Gore's biggest statewide blowout, Rhode Island, Bush still won about a third of the vote.

But what the county map actually shows is that, in line with Michael Barone's demographic analysis, Democratic Nation consists almost exclusively of cities, their surrounding suburbs, and liberal-voting college towns (the latter constituting many of Sullivan's "bluish enclaves"), plus a small number of rural counties where black and Hispanic voters are concentrated. Nor can Republican Nation be written off as a mere assemblage of unpopulated prairie states: Bush ran ahead of Gore in about 2,400 counties with a total population of 143 million, while Gore ran ahead of Bush in only 680

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counties with a total population of 127 million. In short, Gore won in urban and suburban America, Bush nearly everywhere else.

To be sure, one must be cautious in ascribing uniform ideological views to the citizens of Democratic and Republican Nations. Neither nation, as Sullivan correctly pointed out, is by any means completely homogeneous. Moreover, half of all eligible Americans do not vote, and their nonparticipation in the electoral process poses a distinct problem to anyone seeking to sort the citizenry into two kinds of people. Are nonvoters disillusioned, or merely apathetic? Do they resemble their voting neighbors in cultural allegiance, or do they differ? In the absence of solid answers, it is not possible to say with certainty that the two nations are as different as they appear to be. (In their customary difference-splitting style, the editors of the *New York Times* declared that this election revealed the existence of not one and not two but "three Americas—one Republican, one Democratic, and one that seems to seek a balance point in the broad middle ground.")

Nevertheless, the exit polls tell us a great deal about the sharply varying cultural allegiances of those Americans who *do* vote, and thus about why, in a country where the political parties that reflect these allegiances are themselves equal in size, one can no longer speak of a "dissident" culture, any more than one can properly speak of women as members of a "minority" group. Nor is Republican Nation a counterculture: it is, rather, a separate but fully equal entity, capable of competing on essentially equal terms with Democratic Nation for the power to shape America's future.

HOW DID two cultures become two nations? John Podhoretz, writing in the (London) *Times*, has attributed the fierceness of partisan division in America to the fact that "the voting population can indeed be divided into two camps: those who have a direct or indirect financial interest in government and those who wish to be protected from government encroachment." Other conservatives are more inclined to blame the rise of identity politics. Both analyses are valid up to a point, but other factors are at least as significant, if not more so.

The first of these factors is the transformation of the old Democratic party into a left-liberal enterprise driven as much by ideological fervor as by the desire to win votes. This was not always the case. In the southeast Missouri of the 1960's, where I grew up, there were no Republicans (save for the occasional eccentric), only Democrats, some liberal and others conservative, who ran against one another in party primaries that were tantamount to general elections. Such one-party enclaves were not the norm in postwar America, but they were common enough to force both major parties into accommodating a fairly wide variety of ideological views in order to survive. Even well-known politicians often found it necessary to work both sides of the street: Senator J. William Fulbright, a dyed-in-the-wool liberal who opposed the Vietnam war, looked the other way when it came to racial segregation in his home state of Arkansas.

All this began to change in the 70's, and not only in the formerly "solid" Democratic South. The nomination of George McGovern in 1972, and the subsequent reorganization of the national party structure along ideological lines, shocked conservative Democrats everywhere, and though the long-term effects of these developments were initially slow to take hold, they proved to be far-reaching. Year after year, conservative Democratic politicians have either been defeated by Republican challengers or switched parties in order to remain in office. The result is the great L-shaped swath of states that is Republican Nation, many of which used to vote Democratic—including Tennessee, Al Gore's home state, and Arkansas, the home of Bill Clinton. Indeed, in November Gore lost the seventeen-county Tennessee congressional district he had represented in the House for eight years. As for Missouri's Scott County, my old one-party home, it went for Bush by 57 percent.

No less significant has been the simultaneous transformation of America's elite colleges and universities into instruments of meritocratic change. The Ivy League portrayed in the novels of John P. Marquand and Louis Auchincloss, a handsomely appointed men's club dominated by the well-dressed sons of affluent alumni, has long since become an achievement-obsessed sparring ground where the "gentleman's C" is a thing of the unlamented past. (The mean score of Harvard's entering freshman class on the verbal portion of the SAT test jumped from 583 in 1952 to 678 in 1960.) Instead of serving as finishing schools for the Northeastern upper class, these institutions now act as search engines that locate and recruit bright young men and women from all across America, indoctrinating them in the process with the cultural assumptions of the New Class.

The sorting process is neither universal nor perfect: not everybody with good grades can go to Harvard or Yale or Stanford. But it has already been effective enough to alter the ideological

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makeup of large parts of America. For, instead of returning whence they came, there to leaven the cultural loaf and in turn to be influenced by local opinions and customs, successful products of the meritocratic machine typically migrate to New Class-dominated cities and suburbs, where seldom is heard a contradictory word.

This process, by the way, holds true for both nations—though Democratic Nation, being far more densely populated than Republican Nation, is more capable of exerting peer pressure on dissenting residents. Although many people have the idea that political correctness is imposed from above, Soviet-style, in fact it is a manifestation of growing cultural homogeneity. In coherent environments, the citizenry needs little prompting to obey the unwritten laws.

Finally, American culture has been reshaped by information-age capitalism. As Michael J. Weiss explains in *The Clustered World: How We Live, What We Buy, and What It All Means About Who We Are* (2000), corporations no longer market new products to the American people as a whole, but to carefully calculated combinations of 62 demographic "lifestyle clusters" with names like "Red, White, & Blues" (small-town blue-collar families) or "Boomers & Babies" (young white-collar suburban families), whose members are known to prefer gourmet coffee to Coca-Cola, or Dodge pick-ups to Chevrolet Camaros. Instead of three TV networks, we have a hundred channels, each "narrowcasting" to a tiny sliver of the viewing public. By maximizing and facilitating choice, information-age capitalism has fused with identity politics to gut the common culture—and thereby to widen the gap between Democratic and Republican Nations.

Political candidates, too, armed with new techniques borrowed from the commercial marketplace, are targeting ever-narrowing segments of the population ever more effectively. According to Weiss, Bill Clinton was the first presidential candidate to use these techniques to maximum effect. In 1995, he commissioned the Democratic consulting firm of Penn & Schoen to determine what positions would appeal to those "clusters" that contained the largest number of swing voters, and tailored his speeches accordingly.

This has had a paradoxical effect. As each of the two major political parties refines its pitch so as to maximize its appeal to swing voters, it moves closer in practical terms to the center of the political spectrum. Hence the oft-repeated assertion of commentators like Andrew Sullivan that the distinctions between the various policies advocated by Bush and Gore "were, on a cosmic level, trivial. . . . Only the emphases were different." But this in turn serves to throw the residual cultural differences between the parties into higher relief. And these underlying differences are inherently the ones most difficult to paper over: like most Americans, most politicians find it far easier to compromise on prescription-drug plans and tax cuts than on abortion.

As a result, an individual voter's decision to choose one party over the other is now prone to be not arbitrary, but culturally "correct." Today, a young voter who opposes gun control, or supports public-school vouchers, will quickly see that there is no place for him in Democratic Nation, no matter how his parents may have voted in bygone days. So instead of choosing a party out of familial loyalty, as once was generally the case, he will end up choosing it out of cultural convictions—just as he is more likely to settle in a community where his next-door neighbor shares those convictions.

Hence the gradual segregation of the electoral map into two geographically discrete belts that share a shrinking pool of common cultural assumptions—Dos Passos's "two nations." And hence the most ambiguous and destabilizing outcome in the history of American presidential elections.

ASIDE FROM the question of legitimacy posed by the extreme closeness of the Bush-Gore presidential race, just how dire is the larger situation?

After all, it has been said, the two parties have been moving toward the middle of the road for some time now. It is even arguable that the reason Gore did less well regionally than Clinton (he lost several states that had been won by Clinton) is that he chose to position himself as a more liberal candidate in order to secure his left-wing base. Clinton himself claimed in a November interview that the election results demonstrated that "about two-thirds of the people want a dynamic center that pulls the people together and moves us forward."

Nevertheless, the cultural polarization of the electorate remains a real and documentable phenomenon. What it indicates is that earlier conceptions of national unity—and earlier methods of appealing to the interests of the country as a whole—are becoming obsolete. This is even more the case given the advent of the deliberately divisive "permanent campaign" tactics that, perfected by the Clinton-Gore administration, now seem to have become a permanent part of American political life. All too characteristic of the rhetoric of Democratic Nation's "spinmeisters" was this post-election com-

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ment made on the website of MSNBC, the cable news channel, by Paul Begala, who disingenuously claimed after the fact to have been offering "a more sophisticated, nuanced view" of the values prevailing in Republican Nation:

> Tens of millions of good people in Middle America voted Republican. But if you look closely at that map you see a more complex picture. You see the state where James Byrd was lynch-dragged behind a pickup truck until his body came apart—it's red [i.e., Republican]. You see the state where Matthew Shepard was crucified on a split-rail fence for the crime of being gay—it's red. You see the state where right-wing extremists blew up a federal office building and murdered scores of federal employees—it's red. The state where an Army private who was thought to be gay was bludgeoned to death with a baseball bat, and the state where neo-Nazi skinheads murdered two African-Americans because of their skin color, and the state where Bob Jones University spews its anti-Catholic bigotry: they're all red, too.

Given such inflammatory talk—and the fact that it is considered perfectly acceptable discourse in the elite media—it is reasonable to expect that the distance between the two nations will continue to grow. Not only are most of the issues that separate them cultural in nature, they partake of an essentially religious character. This holds true for militantly secular citizens of Democratic Nation as much as it does for Bible-believing residents of Republican Nation. An unmarried, sexually active TV producer in Los Angeles for whom the preservation of *Roe* v. *Wade* by any means necessary is the highest of political priorities is fully as "religious" in her own way as a Southern Baptist mother of three who backs school vouchers in the hopes of being able to send her children to a Christian academy. In this fusion of religious with regional factionalism lies a recipe for national disunity of the most destructive kind.

Is it possible to forge a cross-cultural consensus? Some Republicans have thought so. George W. Bush not only presented himself to the American people as a staunch advocate of bipartisanship, but deliberately tailored his campaign rhetoric in such a way as to appeal to Democratic Nation. This was the meaning of "compassionate conservatism," and of last year's relentlessly inclusive Republican convention. Did it succeed? Once again, the electoral map and exit polls supply the dispiriting answer: Democrats consolidated their hold on blacks and unmarried women in 2000, and increased their vote totals in the suburbs. As for the Hollywood wing of the Democratic party, it is more committed than ever to mass cultural demagogy as a way of political life. (Tune in to any episode of *The West Wing*.)

This hardly means, however, that Democratic Nation will prevail over Republican Nation. "Maybe there are fewer of us than I thought," the conservative radio commentator Rush Limbaugh told his listeners the day after the election. In fact, exit polls show that conservatives still outnumber liberals by 29 percent to 20 percent, with 50 percent of voters describing themselves as "moderate." Fifty-three percent say they prefer less government to more government.

The seemingly equal balance between Democratic Nation and Republican Nation in the 2000 election may thus have been an artifact, as much a function of union-led Democratic turnout efforts as anything else. Over time, such efforts are likely to be swamped by the sheer weight of demographic change. To quote Michael Barone again, "major metro areas are casting a declining share of the nation's votes—Republicans won the House in 1994 with big rural gains and have held it since despite losses in major metro areas." And the trend appears to be continuing: the counties Bush won in November are growing in population at a rate of 14 percent, as opposed to a 5-percent growth rate in Gore's.

Whether these trends are good news or bad news for the prospects of consensus is another question. Ironically, there may be modest grounds for optimism in certain of the very changes in American political life that helped to make Democratic Nation possible. Conservatives and neoconservatives really did succeed in changing public attitudes toward the welfare state, and Bill Clinton responded to that change, however cynically and grudgingly; had he not done so, he would not have been elected President. Despite the short-term failure of Bush's image-building, the process of reaching out is just that: a process.

THIS BRINGS me back to the two Upper West Siders on whose lunchtime conversation I eavesdropped last November. Having excoriated George W. Bush to the maximum extent possible in the compass of a single lunch hour, the first said to the second, "You know, Ronald Reagan was actually better than Bush, in a way."

"Oh, come on," his friend said.

"No, no, let me explain," came the reply. "At least he got one thing right—he was right about the Soviet Union. About the cold war. I mean,

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you've got to admit it: history proved him right about that, if nothing else."

Indeed it did. Which *might* lead one to hope that if two members of the New Class could come to such a heretical conclusion, chatting over soup and salad in a popular brunch spot on the Upper West Side of Manhattan the day after the most contentious presidential election in modern times, then perhaps it is still possible, if only on an issue-by-issue basis, for reasonable members of Republican Nation to make some kind of common cause with reasonable members of Democratic Nation.

But, of course, much will depend on the willingness of moderate Democrats to disavow the poisonous rhetoric that has lately become a staple of their party's political discourse. Much will also depend on the issues: some (tax cuts, prescription drugs) seem bridgeable, others (abortion, guns) may not be. The rancorous intensity with which the Bush and Gore camps disputed the outcome of the 2000 election all too clearly reflected the magnitude of their cultural differences, and it may be that the tone of that dispute will characterize American politics for the foreseeable future. Still, one would like to think that it is not too late—and that even if, at the moment, America is two nations, it remains one country.

Two Nations or Two Cultures?

Gertrude Himmelfarb

I ENTIRELY (well, almost entirely) agree with Terry Teachout. The election has confirmed, even dramatized, the cultural divide in our nation—a cultural divide, as he points out, that now coincides with a geographical divide (that L-shaped swath of the country) and a political divide ("Republican Nation" versus "Democratic Nation"). I also agree with him that cultural issues have become more prominent even as political ones (prescription drugs, tax cuts, and the like) have become less so. How else explain the fact that at a time of unprecedented peace and prosperity, half the electorate was prepared to turn out the party in power? Or that the "religion gap," the "gender gap," the "marriage gap," and other cultural gaps have become so conspicuous? (They are even more conspicuous than the statistics cited by Teachout suggest: 70 percent of Republican voters are married; 52 percent of Democratic voters.)

Long before the actual election, the primary campaigns alerted us to these developments. In an article in COMMENTARY at the time ("The Election and the Culture Wars," May 2000) I spoke of a renewal of the "culture wars": within the Republican party in the resurgence of religious conservatism; and between the parties, with polls showing George W. Bush and Al Gore running dead even, while born-again Christians (among Catholics as well as evangelicals) favored Bush by more than two to one. Still other evidence surfaced in the course of the electoral campaign and, now, in the results of that election.

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During the campaign, the sociologist Alan Wolfe, the stalwart proponent (as the title of his 1998 book put it) of the "one nation, after all" thesis—that is, one nation, one culture—belatedly discovered that America is so "bitterly divided over morality" that something like a policy of "moral federalism" should be adopted to allow states and localities to deal with those divisive moral issues. The choice of Senator Joseph Lieberman as Vice President Gore's running mate was an obvious attempt to dispel the aura of our "morally challenged" President, as was the extraordinary effort of the Vice President to distance himself from the President (and from his own complicity in that presidency). Even the rhetoric of public discourse changed, as commentators revived talk of the "culture wars" and newspapers spoke of a new "morality-based politics," with each party seeking to capture the "moral high ground."

And now the election itself, with its cliff-hanger ending, has brought to the fore still more evidence of the cultural divide. Confronted with an intensity of feeling on both sides of the divide, far surpassing that exhibited even at the time of the Clinton impeachment, analysts have been driven back into our history to recall similar outbursts of moral passion—most obviously the culture wars of the 1960's (or the 1970's, as one commentator prefers), or further back still to the elections of the 1880's and 90's, which are said to have reflected the "values gap" of an all too real and bloody Civil War. "Two Countries, One System" read the headline of a recent article describing an America "of two minds, profoundly divided over the culture." Indeed, the term "cultural divide" has become the accepted shorthand phrase for that syndrome of values—concerning religion, marriage, family, abortion, work (the "Puritan ethic")—which, many analysts now agree, were more decisive in the election than the ephemeral political issues and which help account for the bitter aftermath of the election.

The election also demonstrates that the tradition-minded "dissident culture," as I have called it, is probably larger than I estimated when I wrote my book two years ago, although even then I called attention to the fact that that culture was growing, especially among the young. It is an encouraging sign of the times (and a good omen for the future) that young people are more conservative on most cultural and moral issues than they had been. While they voted for Gore by a narrow margin, it was a very much narrower one than their vote for Clinton four years earlier.

If I still resist the "two nations" formulation that Teachout proposes, it is for the same reason that I resisted it in my book (having earlier used that phrase in essays and lectures). It is too easily mistaken for Disraeli's famous "two nations"—i.e., the rich and the poor; or for that other much-publicized "two nations," black and white. Nor are Teachout's "Democratic Nation" and "Republican Nation" entirely satisfactory. As he himself says, neither "nation" is as culturally homogeneous as those labels suggest.

There are Republicans who are that for purely economic reasons and who have no interest in, let alone quarrel with, the dominant culture itself. And there are Democrats, including many African-Americans and some religious Jews, who are that for traditional or political reasons, in spite of their cultural dissidence. It is an impressive fact that 63 percent of those who go to church more than once a week voted for Bush; but there is that 36 percent or so who voted for Gore. And while most religious conservatives vote Republican, as many as 40 percent in the congressional elections of 1998 voted Democratic.

My "one nation, two cultures" formula cuts across those categories (or "nations") of rich and poor, black and white, Republican and Democratic; cultural conservatives may be found in all of them. It also places those conservatives firmly within "one nation," thus dispelling any suggestion that they are at all wanting in patriotism, public-spiritedness, or civic-mindedness; theirs is not a segregationist or militia mentality. "Two nations" strikes me as too stark, too intransigent, too fatally divisive—which is perhaps why Teachout concludes his essay by reminding us that America may be two nations, but "it remains one country."

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Computers and the Pursuit of Happiness

David Gelernter

In recent years we have been notified almost continuously that we are living in an "information age." Mankind (it is suggested) has completed a sort of phase shift: the solid agricultural age was replaced two centuries ago by the liquid industrial age, which has now given way to the gaseous (so to speak) age of information. Everyone says so, but is it true? *Has* an old age ended, and are we, thanks to computers and the Internet, living in a new one? A related question: computers have been around for roughly a half-century; have they been good or bad for mankind? And finally: are they likely to do good or bad over the next half-century?

1.

We are *not* in an information age, and computers and the Internet are not a revolutionary development in human history.

In the old industrial age (people say) coal, steel, and concrete mattered; in the new age, information counts. Yet it is obvious that coal, steel, and concrete still count just as much as they ever did. We have always needed food, clothing, shelter, possessions, and above all each other. We always *will* need those things, and the "information revolution" will never lessen our needs by half a hair's breadth. So whom are we kidding? What nouveau cyber-billionaire ever used his billions to buy *information*? Who ever worried about poverty because he would be unable to keep his family well-informed?

Not long ago I saw a rented U-Haul trailer with the inevitable web address in big letters on the side, "uhaul.com"—the information age in nine easy characters. Yes, it is convenient to check a website for information about trailers for rent; but the Internet will never (*can* never) change our need for physical stuff, or for trailers to haul it around in. Fifty years from now, it may be possible to download artistically designed experiences and beam them via trick signals into your brain. (To many people this will sound like a junior grade of hell, but some technologists think of it as a Coming Attraction.) The interesting fact remains: virtual gourmet food will make you feel full but will not keep you from starving. Virtual heat will make you feel warm but will not keep you from freezing. Virtual sex will make you feel satisfied in the sense that a pig feels satisfied.

About computers in particular, believers in a new information age make three arguments. They say it is a new age because we now have sophisticated machines to create, store, and deliver information; because computer networks can overcome geography; and because machines (in their own special areas) can act intelligently. All three claims are wrong. Computers have done marvel-

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ous deeds—but in each case, their great deeds are in keeping with the long-established patterns of the industrial age. Computation today is a dusting of snow that makes everything look different—on the surface.

Fancy machines to create, move, and store information were a main preoccupation of the whole 20th century, not just the computerized part of it. Movies, phonographs, color photography and color printing, the electronic transmission of photos, the invention of radio and radio networks and international radio hookups, newsreels, television, transistorized electronics, long-distance phone networks, communication satellites, fax machines, photocopiers, audio and video tapes, compact disks, cell phones, cable TV—and then, with the emergence of PC's and the Internet, suddenly we are in an information age? The 20th century was one information-gusher after another; information pouring into people's lives through more and more stuck-open faucets.

The defeat of geography? In *Cyberspace and the American Dream* (1994), distributed electronically by the Progress and Freedom Foundation, a distinguished group of authors argued that "we constitute the final generation of an old civilization and, at the very same time, the first generation of a new one." Their claim centered on the idea that, thanks to computer networks, geography had (in effect) been overcome; henceforth, shared interests and not physical proximity would shape community and society.

But using technology to defeat distance has been another goal of the industrial revolution from the start, from railroads through the Panama Canal and onward. Rail networks, telegraph networks, air and phone and highway and radio and TV networks—the Internet is the latest in a long line.

The 20th century teemed with smart machines, too, long before the computer showed up—simple ones like the thermostat or a car's electrical system (with automatic spark-advance); complex, sophisticated ones like automatic transmissions or the Norden bombsight in World War II. Granted, computers are a huge advance over the machines that came before, but huge advances are the stuff of the industrial age. The web is a big deal, but flying machines were a pretty big deal, too. Radio and TV changed the nature of American democracy. The electric-power industry turned society inside out.

The cost of not knowing history is not ignorance so much as arrogance. A popular book about the Internet and the web begins with this "personal note" from the author:

> The Internet is, by far, the greatest and most significant achievement in the history of mankind. What? Am I saying that the Internet is more impressive than the pyramids? More beautiful than Michelangelo's *David*? More important to mankind than the wondrous inventions of the industrial revolution? Yes, yes, and yes.

That sort of statement suggests that technologists are fundamentally unserious. By the way: a useful and interesting book. But the author protests too much. It is hard to picture comparable statements greeting the airplane's or the electric-power industry's emergence; they were too big and too obviously important to need this sort of cheerleading. What the author is really announcing is not a new age of information but a new age of hype, a new age of new ages.

Computers and the Internet *have* made a revolution in science and engineering. Studying computational models of reality can be cheaper and better than studying reality. Sometimes reality is impossible to measure or too steep to scale, and computational models are the only way to get any purchase on it. Those are the *actual* computer revolutions; the others are mostly potential and not real, locked up in awe-inspiring icebergs that just float around eliciting admiration and making trouble. The computer revolution is still frozen, latent, waiting to happen.

As for the information age, it must have begun at least a hundred years ago if it exists at all. *Are* we better informed than we used to be? I doubt it. Is anyone prepared to assert that the U.S. electorate is better informed today than it was at the time of (say) the 1960 presidential election? That our fifth graders are better informed about reading, writing, history, or arithmetic? That our fifth-grade *teachers* are better informed? (Recently my fifth-grade son learned from his English teacher that "incredible" and "incredulous" are synonyms. That's the information age for you.)

2.

HAVE COMPUTERS been good or bad for mankind since they were invented roughly 50 years ago?

Other things being equal, information is good. Wealth is good. Computers have supplied lots of information, and generated much wealth.

But we are marvelously adaptable. We can take miserable conditions in stride and triumph over them; we can take wonderful conditions in stride

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and triumph over *them*. Humanity in any given age has a wealth threshold and an information threshold. If you are below either one, living in poverty or ignorance, you need more wealth or information. But once you are over the threshold, only the rate of change matters. Acquire more wealth or information, and presumably you will be happier; then you stabilize at your new, higher level, and chances are you are no happier than before. It is not exactly a deep or novel observation that money doesn't buy happiness. Neither does information.

In this country, the majority—obviously not everyone, but most of us—have been over-threshold in wealth and information for several generations, roughly since the end of World War II. That is a remarkable achievement; it ought to make us proud and thankful. But it follows that increasing our level of wealth or information is unlikely to count terribly much in the larger scheme of things. The increase itself will feel good, but the substance of our new wealth or information won't matter much.

Here is a small case in point. My two boys, who are ten and thirteen, love playing with computers, like most children nowadays. The computer is their favorite toy, and unquestionably it makes them happy. Computer play as it is practiced in real life, at least at our house, is a mindless activity; like many families, we have to limit the time our boys are allowed at it or they would spend all day wrecking pretend Porsches and blowing up enemy airplanes. But mindless activities are fine in reasonable doses. It's good for children to have fun, and I'm glad ours have so much fun with computers.

When my wife and I were children, we didn't have computers to play with. We lacked these wonderful, happiness-generating devices. But—so what? Other things made us happy. We never felt deprived on account of our lack of computer power. It would be crazy to deny that computers are great toys, but it would be equally crazy to argue that they have made children any happier, on the whole, than children used to be. Fifty years from now, the computer-based toys will make today's look pathetic, and children will love all their snazzy new stuff—just as much, probably, as children loved their bats and balls and blocks and trains and jumpropes and dollhouses in 1900.

WHAT WE ordinarily fail to take into account when we are adding up the score is the nature of technological change. Technology is a tool for building social structures. Granted, each new technology is better than the one it replaces. But new technologies engender new social structures, and the important question is not whether the new technology is better but whether the new structure is better. Except in the case of medical technologies, the answer will nearly always be debatable; nearly always *must* be debatable. We can easily show that, with each passing generation, paints have improved. It is much harder to show that art has improved.

Human nature does not change; human needs and wants remain basically the same. Human ingenuity dreams up a new technology, and we put it to use—doing in a new way something we have always done in some other way. In years past, many towns had shared public wells. They were communal gathering places: you met neighbors, heard the news, checked out strangers, sized up the competition, made deals, dates, matches. Plumbing was a great leap forward, which few of us (certainly not me) would be willing to trade in. The old system was a nuisance, especially if *you* were the one carrying the water; but it was neighborly. The new, plumbing-induced social structure was far more convenient, not to say healthier. It was also lonelier. The old and new structures excelled in different ways, and cannot be directly compared.

The web is an improvement much like plumbing, without the health benefits. Fifty years ago, most shopping was face to face. In the Internet age, face-to-face stores will not survive long, any more than communal wells survived the advent of plumbing. To our great-grandchildren, shopping will mean "online," as it meant "face to face" to our great-grandparents. Future generations will look back wistfully but probably not unhappily. On the whole, their happiness and their ancestors' will probably be about the same. To the extent future generations *are* happier or unhappier than we—and "national happiness" does change, it's hard to doubt that America in 1950 was a happier country than America today—we can be fairly sure of one thing. The net change will have nothing to do with technology.

A major new technology remakes society—picks up the shoebox, shakes it hard, puts it back. The new social structures we build almost always incorporate less human labor than the old ones. The old structures (in other words) have a larger "human ingredient," the new ones a larger "machine ingredient." It is nearly always impossible to compare the two directly. And in the meantime the old ones have disappeared. Where technology is concerned, we demolish the past and live in a permanent present.

In the lush technology future, we will be kids in a candy store. The old zero-sum economics of Malthus and his modern disciples has long since

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been discredited; we will swagger into that Candy Store of the Future with more money all the time, and find more and fancier candy in there every day. Our inventiveness, productivity, and potential wealth are all unlimited. Only our appetite for candy is not.

3.

IF MANKIND were somehow prevented from continuing to invent technology, continuing to develop computers and software—that would be a tragedy, and the world would suffer. Nothing comes more naturally to us than building and playing with machines. Inventing technology is the intellectual equivalent of breathing.

Is breathing helpful? Yes. Will it conduce to a better world in 2050? Right again! But only in a certain sense.

In 1991 I published a book called *Mirror Worlds*; in a way, it was a celebration of computing technology (although it was ambivalent about computers in the end). It predicted the emergence of software versions of real-world institutions that you would "tune in" by means of a global network. It claimed that this would be a good development: you would be able to tour the world "without changing out of your pajamas." These mirror worlds would be "the new public square," would "monopolize the energy and attention of thousands. . . , broadcast an aesthetic and a world-view to millions, mold behavior and epitomize the age."

Talk about modest claims—although in looking back at the web boom that began in 1994 they seem, if anything, too modest. In predicting that "the software revolution hasn't begun yet, but it will soon," I was basically right. The industrial age ushered in new categories and possibilities, and computers and software are creating new possibilities, too: new types of structures that are just as unprecedented as the Eiffel Tower.

Consider an online school. Such a school might offer guided nature-walks through teeming, chattering, blossoming rain-forests of the intellect where your guide knows exactly what you are capable of, can make the path expand or shrink to suit you, can point out the biggest vistas or the tiniest orchid—and the whole structure can be moored in cyberspace, where anyone who likes can climb aboard. Instead of merely reteaching the same class year after year, we could make the path better every year. As a student follows a trail, we could turn that trail into his personal diary, for review or revisiting whenever he likes; he could keep his whole school career in his back pocket. We could plant pictures or maps at the center of lessons if they belonged there, instead of pasting them in as afterthoughts.

And these new software structures could be world-spanning switchboards, connecting the right student to the right teacher. If Mrs. Feinstein is the English teacher for little Kate Smith, then wherever Mrs. Feinstein lives (Auckland, Nome, Passaic), whatever hours she keeps, whatever her formal qualifications, we could patch her into the system.

I would rather put Kate in an actual school where actual teachers could look her in the face when they are trying to teach her something. But American education is in desperate trouble—and under the circumstances, software-based teaching is probably our best hope. In the future we will compare our ubiquitous software schools to the face-to-face education of the pre-1970's the way we compare online shopping to long-ago Main Streets: we will be wistful, as usual, but not wistful enough to do anything about it. On the whole we will be content.

Of course, we are talking about new software *structures*—not mere computers, not mere information. And we are talking about something that *could* happen, but hasn't yet.

HUMAN BEINGS are mainly interested in human beings. If computers do good in the next 50 years, the good they are most likely to do lies in helping mankind know itself better.

A large part of cognitive science is built on a famous analogy, the analogy that did so much for the functionalist school of philosophy in the 1950's and 60's and that many researchers still believe today: mind is to brain as software is to computer. This analogy is fundamentally wrong.

Just the fact that software is portable (it can be moved from one computer to another) and minds are not (they cannot be moved from one brain to another) should have told us at the very start that the analogy was fishy. There is no reason to believe that you will ever be able to offload Joe Schwartz's mind and run it on Melissa Clark's brain. It is not even clear what this would mean in principle, because *part* of Schwartz's mind is the fact that it belongs to Schwartz. "Porting a mind" is not only impossible, but in principle meaningless.

In *The Muse in the Machine* (1994) I argued that you cannot understand human thought unless you understand the "cognitive spectrum" that exists in every mind. That spectrum ranges from highly focused, highly aware-of-the-environment "analytic" thought all the way down to "low-focus," oblivious-of-the-environment thought—all the way down, in other words, to the kind of hallucinatory thought

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that happens routinely when we are asleep and dreaming. We will never get a computer to think until we have figured out how to make one hallucinate. To reproduce thought on a computer, we will need to reproduce the whole cognitive spectrum and not just one narrow slice of it.

For many years, the biggest challenge in cognitive science and philosophy has been to understand how we discover analogies, where we get our amazing capacity to notice that two things—objects, situations, events—that *seem* completely unrelated in fact have deep, hidden similarities. This capacity to draw analogies underlies human creativity, and our useful knack of discovering and inventing new things. How does it work?

The evidence suggests, it seems to me, that analogy is driven by emotion. The remarkable thing about human emotion is that two wholly different-*seeming* scenes or memories or circumstances can make us *feel* exactly the same way. Emotion lets us make spectacularly non-obvious connections; in so doing, it lets us discover new analogies, lets us create.

Now, human emotions obviously depend not only on the mind but on the body. You don't think them, you feel them. So: we cannot hope to simulate thought on a computer unless we can simulate the discovery of analogies. We cannot hope to do *that* unless we can simulate emotions on a machine. And we cannot hope to do *that* unless we can simulate not merely abstract mental processes but the complex, nuanced physical reality of the human body.

Eventually, this will be done. Certainly not soon (and certainly not by me)—but it will be done. But even at the end of this enormously difficult, complex task, when humanity has achieved the technological marvel of a machine that can accurately fake human emotions and (therefore) can realistically fake human thought, where exactly will we be?

The human body and its brain have the "emergent property"—or "ensemble property"—of consciousness. When you put exactly the right pieces together in exactly the right way . . . consciousness emerges.

There is no reason, in principle, why computers and software could not have this property as well, and thus lead us to a deeper appreciation of what consciousness means and what it represents. It could be that we will wind up with a "thinking machine" that does not merely talk about daffodils, identify them, draw pictures of them; we might in principle end up with a machine that actually knows what a daffodil *is*. That actually experiences fragrance as we do, color as we do, form as we do—or at least experiences fragrance, color, and form in *some* way; or at least experiences *something* in some way. In other words, that is actually conscious.

ALL THIS *could* be. But we have no good reason to think it ever will be. It could be that consciousness will emerge from exactly the right combination of electronics and software; it could be that consciousness will emerge from exactly the right combination of mozzarella and tomato sauce, or bricks and mortar, or cardboard and rubber cement. None of these things is (in principle) impossible, but none of them is terribly likely, either.

Machines can move faster than we do; so it cannot be that the important thing (the distinguishing thing) about humans is how fast we are. Cannot be how strong we are. Cannot be how well we do arithmetic. It might easily be that in 50 years, machines will be smarter than we are, too. . . .

But I do not think we will conclude that to be human is no big deal after all. I have heard one of technology's most honored, distinguished men tell a large audience how he wished human beings would stop thinking that they are somehow different from animals; it pained him to hear the old canard about man's "uniqueness." He is offering us an easy out: it is simple to be an animal and complicated (Lord knows) to be a man. Should we stop trying, call it a day, and relocate to the barnyard?

Not yet. Most of us are not quite ready to toss out the scraps of morality and sanctity we have pieced together over the long, hard centuries; they may look shabby but they are the best clothes we own. They might even be as important as the Internet. I think we will decide not that we are merely animals after all but that our uniqueness lies beyond strength speed, *and* intellect.

People have said so for a long time, of course. Jews and Christians have long believed it. Chances are that, 50 years from now—thanks to computers—many more people will believe it. Chances are that, 50 years from now, we will be grateful to computer technology for showing us what marvelously powerful machines we can build—and how little they mean after all.

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The Last Time I Saw London

Norman Podhoretz

THE FIRST time I ever laid eyes on the Albert Memorial—the monument erected by Queen Victoria to her beloved consort Prince Albert after his death in 1861—was in the fall of 1950, almost exactly a half-century ago. Not quite having reached my 21st birthday, I was in London thanks to a couple of fellowships that would be sending me to study at Cambridge University. Except for a brief trip to Canada, I had never before been outside the United States, and even though I had majored in English literature at Columbia and knew a lot about the country to which I had just come, I was flabbergasted by how foreign it seemed. Naively I had thought that reading scads of Victorian novels would have familiarized me thoroughly with England in general and London in particular. But the look of the place, the smells, the sounds: all were unexpectedly as strange to my senses as they might have been to anyone who had never read a word of Dickens or George Eliot or Trollope.

The Albert Memorial, however, *did* seem familiar. Except for the Church of St.-Martin's-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square, which bowled me over (as would all the buildings of the 18th-century architect James Gibbs, including the two in Cambridge itself), I had not yet been exposed to the greatest specimens of old European architecture. But I was well acquainted with 19th- and 20th-century imitations of medieval Gothic churches like the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on 110th Street in Manhattan, which I saw almost every day during my four years at Columbia (not to mention the hundreds of such churches strewn all over the city).

At that period of my life, I was mostly ignorant when it came to Gothic or Romanesque or Baroque architecture, hardly being able to remember the difference between a transept and a clerestory. The little that I did know was what I had gleaned from a few lectures by Professor Meyer Schapiro and from reading Henry Adams's book, *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*. Nevertheless, I knew enough to be snooty about faux-Gothic structures, and in this respect the Albert Memorial in London was no different from St. John the Divine in New York.

Nor was my snootiness entirely a borrowed attitude. The truth is that these structures seemed neither beautiful nor impressive to me, and I secretly worried that I would fail to appreciate the originals they had striven so diligently to reproduce, thereby exposing myself to myself as lacking good taste and reliable aesthetic judgment. But such anxieties were put to rest forever on my arrival in Cambridge a week or so later, when King's College Chapel—the great 16th-century masterpiece of the subspecies of Gothic known as English Perpendicular—smacked me in the eyes, and nearly struck me blind with its glory.

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Then, during Christmas vacation, I went on the first of what would become several tours of the major medieval cathedrals, beginning with England and France. By this point I had grown intimately acquainted with King's College Chapel, which I passed every single day on my rounds (as I had so recently done with St. John the Divine). Yet, partly because it was relatively small, not even its sublimity prepared me for these much larger and unutterably magnificent creations, which far surpassed anything I had imagined. Now my only secret worry about the possible deficiency of my own taste and judgment was that I thought the best English cathedrals were on the whole better than their counterparts in France; and, where the latter were concerned, that I preferred Notre Dame in Paris to Chartres, which the cognoscenti considered superior.

Returning to London after all that, I came again upon the Albert Memorial on my way to a concert at the Albert Hall, to my eyes an even uglier Victorian pile, across the street. There the famous monument was, standing 175 feet high in Kensington Gardens—"one of the great sculptural achievements of the Victorian era," as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* today unequivocally describes it in an article that adds a sober factual description to the rhapsodic aesthetic judgment with which it begins:

> The architect was George Gilbert Scott, and he was much inspired by miniature medieval shrines, and also by the medieval Eleanor Crosses, set up by King Edward I in memory of his dead Queen, Eleanor, wherever the funeral procession went. . . . The composition has a large statue of Albert seated in a vast Gothic shrine, and includes a frieze with 169 carved figures, angels, and virtues higher up, and separate groups representing the Continents, Industrial Arts, and Sciences.

Seeing this shrine with eyes that had by now been bedazzled by the real thing over and over and over, I was filled with even greater snootiness than before, and my disdain was buttressed by more authority than I had earned the right to feel the first time around.

Like many students of English literature in those far-off days, I had been much influenced by T.S. Eliot's theory (which for us had the force of dogma to a pious Catholic) concerning the "dissociation of sensibility" that had supposedly taken place with the passing of such "metaphysical" poets of the 17th century as John Donne and Andrew Marvell. According to this view, the birth of modern science (what Donne had called "new Philosophy"), together with other disintegrative forces rising cockily out of the ruins of the Middle Ages, had split emotion off from intellect, turning what had been an integrated whole into two bleeding parts. The effects, Eliot argued (and amplifications of his brief and lapidary observations were soon added by his disciples), had been harmful to poetry, and most especially as they reached their full nefarious maturity among the Romantics of the 19th century.

I cannot recall who later pointed to the so-called Gothic revival in architecture and the cult of medievalism in general as vivid illustrations of how far the dissociation of sensibility had gone outside the sphere of literature no less than within it. That such a cult had arisen did at least testify to the felt need for what had been lost. But the coarseness of line and the heaviness of shape in Victorian Gothic, as compared with the inexplicably miraculous grace and lightness of the buildings being imitated, demonstrated the incapacity of the Romantics to recover what they hungered for, or even to understand what exactly it was. And something similar was reflected in the sentimentality and—the word is inescapable—the romanticization of the medieval age in, for example, the novels of Sir Walter Scott and the early poems of Lord Byron. At any rate, with a head full of such related notions, I had no trouble whatsoever in understanding why the Albert Memorial was an object of derision among people of refined sensibility.

I spent three years in England, mostly in Cambridge, but I also visited London whenever an opportunity presented itself, and when I did, if I chanced to pass by the Albert Memorial, I hardly deigned even to cast a glance in its direction. On my many subsequent trips to London in later decades my attitude toward the Albert Memorial remained what it had always been. During the 1990's, I noticed that this sorry monument was under scaffolding and heard that very expensive work had been decided upon after a debate in which the forces calling for demolition were overcome by those in favor of restoration. This meant repairing the damage from pollution and weather and doing whatever else might be necessary to recapture the way the monument had originally looked.

By the time I saw it again, a few months ago, the work had been completed and the scaffolding was down. I was in London for only a few days, to attend a wedding, and my plans for a small amount of wandering about the city certainly did not include a trip to the Albert Memorial. But my hotel happened to be located a short walk away, and when I set out across Hyde Park toward Kensing-

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ton Gardens on the morning of my arrival I realized too late (my sense of direction being almost nonexistent) that I was heading right toward it and it was now looming just a few steps ahead. Oh well, what the hell, I said to myself, it would be stupid to turn back just to avoid the damn thing, and so on I resignedly went.

A MINUTE later, I came full upon it, and an amazing thing happened: the sight of this once despised monument nearly knocked me flat. There was no doubt that it had changed. It looked positively spiffy in its cleaned-up condition, and there was gilt all around the edges that I could not remember having been there before (or perhaps it had been there and I had either not noticed it or considered such ornamentation yet another mark of its vulgarity).

And there were other, nonphysical ways in which the Albert Memorial had changed. Someone once said (it may have been the critic Mary McCarthy and she may even have been talking about Victorian architecture) that ugly things turn beautiful as they grow older. For as they grow older, the period quality that had been repellent to the next generation takes on an appeal of its own. Hence Victorian Gothic no longer strikes the eye as a gross parody of medieval Gothic but as an artifact with an integrity of its own and a coherence indigenous to and evocative of its era.

There is an analogy here with the sociological "law" (richly confirmed in the ethnic and religious worlds around us today) that was propounded by Marcus Hanson in the 1950's about immigrants to America: what the second generation wishes to forget, the third wishes to remember. Which means that the change in the Albert Memorial was not only in its appearance, and in the aging process it had undergone, but in *us*, or (since I cannot be sure that my response is typical) at least in me. I had never been among those who, in the spirit of Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* and of his Bloomsbury friends in the Edwardian era and later, derided the Victorian age. How could I, when so many of my literary heroes were Victorians themselves, and when I understood from reading them that Victorian England did not deserve the sneers that had been visited upon it by the generation immediately following? Nevertheless, as a child of my own time, how could I avoid being simultaneously influenced by those sneers (which were echoed in this country not only against England but also against the America of the late 19th century)?

To the extent that this influence took root in my thinking (or rather in my unthinking and reflexive responses), I, too, looked down upon "Victorianism" as a shorthand for the moral and spiritual oppressions of the puritanism, philistinism, hypocrisy, and middle-class stuffiness supposedly characteristic of the era, both in England and America. Against all this I was on the side of the rebels who set out to liberate us from it.

Not any more. And so, if in the year 2000 the Albert Memorial was not what it had been 50 years earlier, neither was I. Unlike that monument, alas, I had not grown more beautiful with age, nor (except for losing a lot of weight) had I undergone any kind of restoration. But having lived through the concrete consequences, I have no doubt that the wholesale repudiation of "Victorianism" in the moral sphere has resulted in damage broader in scope and more destructive than Eliot's "dissociation of sensibility." As Gertrude Himmelfarb, the most distinguished student of the Victorian period in America, has taught us, both in long and detailed scholarly works and in shorter polemical volumes, the virtues of the Victorians far outweighed their deficiencies. She has also shown us, with an authority few if any can match, how the consummation of the rebellion against the Victorians, which started early in this century and culminated in the 1960's, has led to a "de-moralization of society."

Still, it was not primarily this change in my moral attitudes that accounted for the wholly surprising impression the Albert Memorial now made on me. What overwhelmed me was the enormous confidence in England, and in its benevolence and power, that emanated from those stones. Prince Albert sits there looking like a Roman emperor transformed into a god on whom the angels and the virtues in the surrounding frieze dance attendance, while the sculptures around and below him, depicting the continents and the four branches of industry, suggest that he presides over a vast empire and over a great economy based on the newest forms of knowledge and enterprise.

The arts are there, too, belying the charge of philistinism that the progeny of the Victorians so delighted in hurling against their immediate ancestors (though very little in post-Victorian British literature could hold its head up high in the presence of the best work of these "philistines"). Many of the artists represented—Homer, Dante, Michelangelo, etc.—are not British, but they have in a sense been imperially conscripted into the English pantheon. It reminded me of the exam paper on "The English Moralists" I had to take for my degree at Cambridge, among whom Plato, Aristotle, St. Au-

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gustine, and a few other thinkers not exactly indigenous to the British Isles were serenely placed. Similarly, in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion,* Henry Higgins declares at one point that English is the language of Shakespeare and the Bible.

Well, English is certainly the language of Shakespeare, and it is an allusion from one of his plays that might best have served as a description of Prince Albert as he is depicted in his Memorial. The lines I have in mind are spoken by Cassius to Brutus of Julius Caesar: "Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world/Like a Colossus."

By the 19th century, the world was much wider than it had been to the Romans, but Great Britain, personified here by Prince Albert, most assuredly did bestride it with a reach extending to four continents and a mastery of all the practical, moral, and spiritual means needed to maintain so colossal a position. If anyone possessed the Confucian "Mandate of Heaven," it was the English of the Victorian period, and the Albert Memorial is only one of many signs that they knew it.

LIKE "THE glory that was Greece/And the grandeur that was Rome,"* all this is gone. I knew that, of course, before my latest visit to London, but the full extent of the fall had never before been borne in upon me. Nor was it only the Albert Memorial that raised my consciousness. Shortly after seeing it, I returned to my beloved Trafalgar Square, where the huge pillar with Lord Nelson at the top seemed not to have changed at all one way or the other. St.-Martin's-in-the-Fields was still there, too, as beautiful as ever, and still (like Sainte Chapelle in Paris, another of my favorite small churches) looking so light and airy that I imagined it could levitate at any moment and float into the sky.

But there was also something in Trafalgar Square that had not been there before: a new wing of the National Portrait Gallery. The old wing, dating back to 1856 and hence another product of the Victorian age, bespeaking its great pride in the country's history and the confidence such pride added to its own sense of accomplishment, houses paintings and sculptures of the leading figures of the English past; the new one is dedicated to paintings (and also photographs) of their putative counterparts or successors in the English present.

Comparing what is contained in the old to what the new has to offer turned out to be one of the more depressing exercises I have ever undertaken: no more blaring announcement of cultural decline could possibly have been sounded by all the sour trumpets in the world. Pop stars and rock stars and the likes of the radical feminist writer Germaine Greer and the perverse historian A.J.P. Taylor dominate the walls of this new wing of a museum built to display icons of giants like Shakespeare and Handel and Newton and Gibbon.

What could one conclude from this experience but that the forces at work in the culture and politics of England in the second half of the 20th century had left a sorry—nay, tragic—wreckage behind? The bomb craters remaining from the blitz that dotted the streets of London when I first got there in 1950 have long since been filled up, but to eyes that can see, there are bomb craters of a different kind gaping from the walls of the National Portrait Gallery's shiny new wing. These are the ones left over from a series of internal wars: from the relentless assault on the old class system by the "Angry Young Men" of the 50's; from the undermining of the old morality in the "Swinging London" of the 60's; from the erosion and stagnation of the economy under successive Labor governments; from the failure of John Major to carry on the counterrevolution against these forces begun by his predecessor as prime minister, Margaret Thatcher (a counterrevolution that, ironically, was itself in certain of its aspects subversive of the old order); from the eagerness of the current Labor Prime Minister Tony Blair (who once described himself "as part of the rock 'n' roll generation") and his supporters to deepen the craters in the educational system and the entire national culture as a way of assuaging the resentments of newer immigrant groups.

I FEAR that I may have begun sounding like the immigrant Jewish Londoner from the East End in a joke that was circulating during my student years in England. Having become rich, he goes to Savile Row to be outfitted by a first-class tailor. Arriving for the last fitting and examining his transformed image in the mirror, he bursts into tears. The tailor, astonished at this response to a suit of which he himself is very proud in every detail, asks his customer what could possibly be wrong. "A pity we lost India!" cries the client.

But India was indeed lost, and so much more with it that the joke may be not on its Jewish subject but on its teller. On top of the depredations I have already listed, the old maxim that culture follows the flag has been amply borne out in the case of Britain, whose leading periodicals many of us once felt obligated to read regularly but no longer do. Nor do we feel the need to keep up with what is going on in the

* I suspect that, like me when I looked up this famous phrase, many people will be taken slightly aback to be reminded that it comes from a poem by Edgar Allen Poe ("To Helen").

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English literary world. Many English writers themselves feel the same way, to judge from the number who have emigrated to America.

Then, too, there is the sociological or demographic sphere to consider. When I lived in England, it was still a homogeneous society. One could see a few "blacks" (a term that for the English included Indians and Pakistanis as well as Negroes from Africa and the Caribbean), most of them students. But except for the occasional tourist speaking French or Italian, the only language one heard while walking the streets was English, and the faces one saw were almost entirely white.

Coming from New York, and having grown up in Brooklyn as the child of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe living side-by-side both with Italian immigrants from Sicily and Naples and with blacks newly arrived from the American South, I was struck very forcibly by this demographic feature of the country in which I found myself as a student. And, in common with all Americans in Europe during that period, I was also struck by how smug was the attack on us from Europeans both Left and Right over our society's treatment of blacks (though this theme soon gave way in popularity to the imminence of fascism that the English were sure Senator Joe McCarthy heralded).

I never wished or tried to defend the dismal state of civil rights in America against such assaults. Yet I could also never resist pointing out to my English interlocutors that, so little conception did they have of what a heterogeneous society was like, they were still going around saying (on the Left, admittedly, in jest) that "the wogs begin at Calais." In later years, long after I had left, England was flooded with immigrants from India and Pakistan, many of them Muslims, and a goodly number of blacks from former colonies. Trouble inevitably ensued of a kind well-known to any American, including race riots and crime statistics that have lately come to resemble New York's before the advent of Mayor Giuliani. Then followed much the same effort to resolve this trouble through such measures as reverse discrimination and the lowering of educational standards, which have only served to exacerbate the tensions they were meant to dissipate. Remembering what I had been put through on this issue in the early 1950's by my complacent English friends and acquaintances, I could not deny myself the vindictive pleasures of *Schadenfreude*.

It was with this very sense of *Schadenfreude* that I recently read pieces in the British press by American observers like Charles Murray and Myron Magnet, both of whom have compiled data showing that an underclass very much like our own has been metastasizing in England, and that it has been giving rise to the usual social pathologies associated with this phenomenon (including the politically correct apologetics, especially involving race, that have followed it as the night the day). A similar indictment has been drawn up in the *National Interest* by its editor, Owen Harries (who was born in Wales and educated in England before emigrating first to Australia and then to the United States). Infected by a dose of *Schadenfreude* himself, Harries writes:

> Until quite recently, it used to be the case that Britain was a decent, civilized country with very good public services but an absolutely lousy economy. Now it has changed to a country with a brilliant economy that is seriously and progressively sick in other respects.

Harries, like Murray and Magnet before him, goes on to report that "in every category of crime except murder . . . Britain now has a worse record than any other developed country." Furthermore, as a "consequence of a deliberate policy of treating equality and anti-elitism as the most important ends of education, and subordinating intellectual performance to them," Britain has plunged "close to the bottom of the table of developed countries . . . in terms of both literacy and numeracy." Nor are these the only pathological symptoms that Harries so depressingly catalogues: the National Health Service, he says, is in "crisis"; the BBC's embrace of an "ideological philistinism" has turned it into a shadow of its former self; and "the country that invented the railway now has a public transport system that is a joke." Still another author, David Pryce-Jones, has gone so far as to suggest in a furious essay in *National Review* that Tony Blair is on the way to destroying every last vestige of what historically has made Great Britain great.

IT IS important, though, to recognize that there may be another side to this story. In the early 50's, when I first arrived, I was amazed not only by the foreignness of England but by its drabness. With the wartime regime of rationing still in force, the food, even in a sanctuary of "young gentlemen" like the colleges of Cambridge University, was as terrible as it was scarce. Hardly anyone had central heating, and the amount of coal doled out was never enough to keep one warm in the winter, even when it was supplemented by cheap electric fires whose meager glow could only be summoned forth by the deposit of coins.

The notorious London fog still existed (a conse-

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quence, as it turned out, of burning soft coal in millions of fireplaces, which meant that the condition could and would eventually be cured by the simple expedient of banning the practice). Onerous and frightening though the fog could be, especially if one were trying to drive, there was admittedly something romantic about it that made for popular ballads like "A foggy day in London town / Had me low and had me down." But the fog also seemed to symbolize the depressive spiritual climate of the first postwar decade, which was definitely having the English both low and down.

In the year 2000, however, the English certainly appeared to me to be more up than down. Strolling down one of my old haunts, the Edgware Road, I sensed a new bounce and vitality. I also marveled at the sound of foreign tongues that seemed to dominate the air, drowning out the only occasional words of English. On the Edgware Road, I think it was mainly Hindi, but in other parts of London it was French (spoken not by tourists but by the "wogs" from Calais and other parts of France who, I learned, have been settling in England by the hundreds of thousands).

Even in my day, the only decent restaurants either in London or Cambridge were Indian (with an occasional Italian trattoria where the only dish on the menu seemed to be spaghetti bolognese), and though the country now boasts many posh establishments serving exquisite cuisine of a kind that had not existed in 1950, there seem to be even more Indian eateries than before. Meanwhile, the dismal Lyons Corner Houses have given way to Starbucks cafés—a huge improvement—and even McDonald's is to my mind (as, evidently, the English of today agree) better than the flyblown fast-food establishments serving fish-and-chips or inedible meat pies it has displaced.

Much of the bounce in the London streets is connected with prosperity, and owes a great deal (everything?) to the changes wrought by Margaret Thatcher's long reign as prime minister. But the new heterogeneity of the society, despite the inevitable tensions and problems it has brought with it, has given an added lift of its own to that bounce. Which is to say that, for better or worse, the country is livelier and more colorful than it used to be, in more ways than one.

But is it, all things considered, for the better or for the worse? The most eloquent statement I have seen of the case for the better has been made by Ferdinand Mount, writing in the London *Times Literary Supplement*, of which he is the editor. Mount expresses wonder at the fact that so many of the younger English novelists have run off to America. "To go to America," they believe (wrongly, in his estimation), "is to take on the great challenge, to open yourself to the future and to leave behind a smug, sclerotic, closed-in country gently sliding toward oblivion on a muggy tide of warm beer." Or, in the complaint of the novelist Martin Amis, "We're heading toward becoming a little efficiency state, like Switzerland. But the country is not exciting in the way a novelist wants it to be. America, for all its faults, is still exciting."

This attitude represents a fascinating reversal. In his little book on Nathaniel Hawthorne, published in 1879, Henry James (who had of course left America for England) made a long list of the kind of material on which the novelist feeds but that his and Hawthorne's native land lacked. Much quoted though this passage has been, it begs to be read yet again in the present context:

> [O]ne might enumerate the items of high civilization, as it exists in other countries, which are absent from the texture of American life, until it should become a wonder to know what was left. No State, in the European sense of the word, and indeed barely a specific national name. No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country-houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities nor public schools—no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class—no Epsom nor Ascot!

But if Henry James thought American society was too "thin" as compared with the thickly textured life of England, Amis and the others think America is at the center of everything, whereas England has degenerated into a dull "backwater." It is over this judgment that Ferdinand Mount takes strong issue with them. Far from being "bland," as Amis charges, England today is in Mount's view "dynamic, . . . sharp and wide-awake, . . . optimistic, even, in a godless, bad-tempered way." And most of all, it is "not like Switzerland." And so there is, he maintains, plenty of material for the novelist to deal with. Yet not even Mount contends that England is still the great country it once was.

Aleksa Djilas, who lived in England for about a decade and has grown disillusioned with it, now writes from Belgrade in the British magazine *Prospect*

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that "The main source of England's greatness was that it was an island, both geographically and in time. Its ideas, institutions, and way of life were either more traditional or more advanced than in Europe or the U.S. Sometimes, most admirably, they were both."

In my opinion, Djilas is right. The Great Britain of the past was indeed great, and the more egalitarian and heterogeneous society that has risen in place of the hierarchical and homogeneous one of old is in critical respects inferior. The country's culture has declined; its sense of itself and its purpose have descended from the heights they formerly occupied; it has pulled down the curtain on the demonstration it once put on of what a tiny island could accomplish by adhering religiously to a moral code of duty, honor, work, and national responsibility; and it looks not with pride but with shame at the power it once had.

FROM THIS sense of shame, one would never guess that Britain used its power to bestow precious gifts upon the rest of the world in the form of political ideas and institutions. And in speaking of the rest of the world, I very definitely mean to include the colonies of the much-maligned British empire. The critics of that empire, especially those of a Marxist persuasion, have succeeded in blackening its name to a point where only the bravest defenders make bold to dissent. One of the boldest of these defenders is the Australian historian Keith Windschuttle who, in a piece in the *New Criterion*, marshals strong evidence to back up his insistence that

> British imperial rule in many parts of Asia, Africa, and the Americas, while it might not have been representative or democratic, was nonetheless orderly, largely benign, and usually fair. For all their faults, most British colonial officials delivered good government—or at least better government than any of the likely alternatives.

Windschuttle goes on to quote William Roger Louis, the editor-in-chief of the recently published five-volume *Oxford History of the British Empire*, who acknowledges the "orderly and efficient government as well as rule under law, the establishment of the courts, and the development of constitutions" that the British brought to their colonies. And none of this is to notice what the eminent economist P.T. Bauer never tires of hammering home in connection with the attack on the empire for exploiting the natural resources of the colonies: England did not take rubber out of Malaya, Bauer keeps on saying, but brought rubber to a place where no such plants had ever existed before. And so it was with other resources in other colonies.

There were, of course, former colonies in which the benign political effects spelled out by Windschuttle and Louis did not take hold, or at any rate did not last beyond independence. According to David Ormsby Gore (Lord Harlech), who was the British ambassador to Washington in the early 1960's, "Britain will be honored by historians more for the way she disposed of an empire than for the way in which she acquired it." Tell that to the late historian Elie Kedourie. In a scathing article in COMMENTARY,* Kedourie insisted that Britain had brought dishonor upon itself precisely through the haste with which it "disposed of" the empire, leaving behind carnage and chaos and in some newly independent countries a despotism that might have been avoided by a more gradual withdrawal.

As one of his illustrations, Kedourie chose Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), to which Lord Soames was dispatched in 1979 from London to arrange for "free and fair" elections that would "produce a government acceptable to the majority." Kedourie then quotes Soames, who knew very well that the elections would be neither free nor fair:

> I believed [Robert Mugabe] was going to win anyhow, and I used to say, you must remember this is Africa. This isn't little Puddleton-in-the Marsh, and they behave differently. And they think nothing of sticking tent poles up each other's whatnot you know and do filthy, beastly things to each other. It does happen, I'm afraid, and it's a very wild thing, an election.

On which Kedourie's comment was:

> Quite so. On various occasions, from the Punjab in 1947 to Rhodesia in 1980, various tent poles were well and truly stuck up Asia's and Africa's whatnot, all with the best intentions, and with the benevolent assistance of the imperial power and its servants.

Windschuttle, further sabotaging Ormsby Gore's prediction, follows Kedourie in stating that "the transition to independence of a sizable part of the empire was a badly handled mess." He places much of the blame for this on

> those critics of imperialism, in both the metropolis and the colonies, who were more concerned to end [Britain's] rule quickly rather than wisely, and who were even less concerned that the boundaries of several new states saddled them with problems that were unresolvable except by violence.

* "Scuttling an Empire," December 1985.

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He even dares to declare that "The lives of millions of ordinary people in these countries would have been much happier had the British stayed longer, that is, until a more satisfactory path to independence and a more sensible map of territorial boundaries had been drawn up."

But the British did not stay, which, as Ferdinand Mount reminds us, provoked former Secretary of State Dean Acheson's jibe of 1963 that the British, having lost an empire, were now in search of a role. Mount, however, suggests that they have finally found one. He does not quite apply to the empire the quip made by the contemporary conservative politician Quintin Hogg (Lord Hailsham) that the British "have the habit of acquiring their institutions by chance or inadvertence, and then shedding them in a fit of absent-mindedness." But Mount does underline the degree to which acquiring an empire radically changed the national character in ways that were not foreseen and how shedding it brought equally unforeseen changes that took a long time to manifest themselves fully.

Up to the early 18th century, Mount notes, the English were thought of by foreign observers as "licentious, self-indulgent, bold, humorous, full of passion." To Voltaire, for instance, they seemed (in Mount's paraphrase) "independent, prickly, coarse, innovative, sentimental, patriotic, basically law-abiding, though corrupt." What then, Mount asks, changed them? His answer is the empire: "It was the empire that taught our ancestors to keep their chins up and their upper lips stiff, and to put public duty before private satisfaction." And it was the empire, he adds, that created the now universally derided idea propounded by Rudyard Kipling of "the white man's burden"—a burden Mount calls "*romanitas*." This "melancholy Latinism" was first used in English by the poet W. H. Auden in 1947; Mount stretches it to cover the code of conduct inculcated by the requirements of holding onto an empire: "discipline, sacrifice, self-denial, fortitude, and loyalty."

But with the empire gone, the rule of the day, Mount says (this time adapting a phrase from William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*), is: "damn braces, bless relaxes." Although there are those who may be alarmed by this change from a braced to a relaxed England, Mount is not among them. Perhaps, he suggests, all that has happened is that the English, freed of the *romanitas* they needed to cultivate in their imperial phase, have rediscovered their pre-imperial selves as "a coarse, freebooting people whose licentiousness is controlled by a certain underlying patriotic self-discipline. Or alternatively, we are all simply going to the dogs. Or again, perhaps a subtle hard-to-grasp mixture of both."

Mount's perspective is worth pondering. Yet when I think of what I heard the stones of the restored Albert Memorial whispering, and when I recall what I saw in the new wing of the National Portrait Gallery, I cannot help feeling that, whether England is "simply going to the dogs" or whether something complicated is happening that may in the end add up to a gain, much more—very much more—has been lost that was of enormous value not only to *Great* Britain itself but also to the world at large.

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Where'd He Go, Joe DiMaggio?

Joseph Epstein

THE BEST criterion of fame is when a crazy person imagines he is you. In his full-court-press biography of Joe DiMaggio, Richard Ben Cramer does not say whether this ever happened to his subject, but it is difficult to think that it did not.* DiMaggio had, after all, first-name fame—fame of the kind that exempts headline writers from even mentioning your last name, like Frank (Sinatra), Johnny (Carson), Barbra (Streisand), Marilyn (Monroe), Michael (Jordan), Jerry (first Lewis, now Seinfeld). It is a small club, and Joe DiMaggio was a charter member.

Fame was DiMaggio's portion, and it was served to him early, often, and throughout his long life. He received it in all its forms, high, mass, and squalid. No doubt he loved it, but it also made him, quite properly, paranoid. "Even paranoids have real enemies," the poet Delmore Schwartz insisted, but it is their friends of whom the immensely famous must really beware. Fame can easily be coined, and, though DiMaggio himself proved excellent at this, turning his mere presence into cash, his signature into gold, he was always leery of others trying to make a buck off his name.

Joe DiMaggio was what is nowadays called an icon. (Once understood to mean a small religious painting, the word "icon" has been called into service in recent years to accommodate the national language inflation, which finds mere "superstar" insufficient.) One of the best reasons *not* to be an icon is that it brings out iconoclasts, often in the disguise of biographers. "The story of DiMaggio the icon [is] well known," writes Richard Ben Cramer. "The story of DiMaggio the man has been buried." His self-appointed task is the indelicate one of exhumation, and his *DiMaggio* leaves plaster shards and shattered glass everywhere.

CRAMER BEGINS his story in 1930, when Joe was fifteen. He was one of nine children, the fourth of five sons, born to a Sicilian fisherman illiterate in both Italian and English who lived in the North Beach section of San Francisco. He was, in Cramer's telling, an oddly detached boy, the sort who was not in need of the approval of his pals. People, somehow, came to him. He also had none of the standard marketable skills. He did not want to work on the fishing boat with his father and older brothers; he hated, in fact, the smell of fish. He had no interest in school, and dropped out at fifteen (his elder brothers had done so even sooner). Instead, he hung out, scuffled for a few bucks a week selling newspapers, playing poker, finding something that could be resold.

But there was one thing Joe could do: he could

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* *DiMaggio: The Hero's Life.* Simon & Schuster, 546 pp., $28.00.

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hit a baseball, really cream it. Whence this talent? Cramer does not, probably really cannot, say. What can be said is that it did not come from relentless early training or deep determination. DiMaggio entered baseball many decades before Little League came along with its early coaching, which is to say long before play for children, for better and worse, was organized. Kids just met on the playground, chose up sides, had established positions, and played the game. Joe played it supremely well and without great effort.

As a boy, he apparently had no special passion for baseball. He became more interested later when he discovered he could make a few dollars playing on semi-pro teams. At eighteen, he signed with the minor-league San Francisco Seals, where his brother Vince played. (A younger brother, Dominic, also played for the Seals and, later, for the Boston Red Sox.) That first season with the Seals, he had a 62-game hitting streak, batting .340 for the year.

He broke into baseball as a shortstop, a position at which he was not much good. The Seals also tried him at first base, at which he was not much better. After joining the New York Yankees in 1936, he would eventually become, along with Willie Mays in the National League, the greatest centerfielder to play the game, Mays having a flair for the dramatic, DiMaggio a flair for making every catch look as graceful and as easy as a thoroughbred trotting into the winner's circle.

Joe DiMaggio's competence at baseball touched on the profound. He could do six of the seven things required by the game: run, throw, field, hit, hit for power, and—here the sixth, magical quality entered in—do all of the above at times of maximum pressure, "in the clutch," when the game was on the line. The only aspect he never mastered—chiefly because he was never called upon to do so—was pitching. (Babe Ruth began as a pitcher, and, during his years with the Boston Red Sox, was a good one.) DiMaggio also had great sports intelligence, intelligence of a kind that, in my experience, is connected to no other, and which entails the instinctual certainty that prevents one from ever making the kind of mistakes that other players make fairly regularly.

At the plate, DiMaggio was a classic of quiet elegance. "The guy was a *statue*," Lefty Gomez, his Yankee teammate, once said. Tall (6'2"), smoothly muscled, he stood, stock still, all concentration, fearless during an age when the vocabulary of pitchers included such happily menacing phrases as "a little chin music" and "smoke him inside." He had the sweetest stroke in the game, and was often photographed—as he is on the back cover of *DiMaggio*—at the end of that great follow-through that left him, stride complete, weight on the left foot, bat on the left shoulder, ball (one assumes) either rolling away out of reach in one of the power alleys or in the delighted hands of a fan in the stands.

A DiMaggio strikeout was a rarity—the New York saloonkeeper Toots Shor, one of his pals and hangers-on, said Joe looked better striking out than other men making a hit. In more than 6,000 times at bat over his career, as we learn from Cramer, he was two-and-a-half times more likely to hit for extra bases than to strike out. On the subject of his superior hitting DiMaggio was not much of a theorist; he believed it came from the same place that Aristotle thought the power of making metaphors derived: God.

In his era—roughly from 1936 to 1951, with two years out for stateside service in World War II—DiMaggio's only rivals as pure hitters were Ted Williams, Stan Musial, Hank Greenberg, and, later, his teammate Mickey Mantle (to whom DiMaggio rarely spoke, telling another teammate, "He's a rockhead"). He was especially rivalrous toward Williams, who may have been the better pure hitter and who was the last player in the major leagues to bat .400 in a season. (DiMaggio probably would have matched it in 1939 if he had not been forced to play the last three weeks with an eye infection, which caused his average to drop 30 points to .381.) "He throws like a broad," DiMaggio said of Williams, "and runs like a ruptured duck." Besides, he would add later, Williams never won anything.

DIMAGGIO WON everything. In his thirteen seasons in the majors, the Yankees were in ten World Series, and victorious in nine of them. He was among that small number of athletes who, through the main force of ability combined with attitude, can make a team produce winners. Others have been able to do this in basketball—Michael Jordan most recently—but basketball involves only five men on the court at one time. In football, a quarterback—Joe Montana comes to mind—can sometimes do it, but since there are two separate teams in football, offense and defense, the feat is highly unlikely. It is rarest of all in baseball, where nine men are on the field and no one but the pitcher dominates, and pitchers work only one game in five.

DiMaggio seems to have accomplished it not only through amazing play but also through an

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Olympian contempt for anyone who contributed to his team's defeat or failed to meet his personal standard. His teammates were in awe of him, in awe of his skill, and no less in awe of his determination to play even when in deep pain. In 1949, he led the American League with 39 home runs, had 155 runs batted in, hit .320, and was in the lineup in 153 of 154 games—playing, as Cramer reports, "hurt in almost every one of them."

A lonely man with no gift for gregariousness, DiMaggio always kept apart from his teammates. Occasionally he would take a young player in hand—the relief pitcher Joe Page is an example Cramer mentions—and build up his confidence. But he dressed for the field in a corner off by himself and spent the half-innings in which he would not be batting near the tunnel to the locker room, alone with a Chesterfield and half a cup of coffee. (A reserve outfielder named Hank Workman had the job of lighting DiMaggio's cigarette just before he arrived in the dugout from centerfield.) He usually made the trip back to his hotel with a friend who was not a team member. A measured aloofness was everywhere part of his style.

Great timing marked not only DiMaggio's playing at the plate and in the field but his larger career. He started with the New York Yankees a year after the great Babe Ruth retired, which seemed to put him in a direct line of succession as the greatest player in the game. When he arrived, the Yanks had gone four years without a pennant; in his rookie year he helped take them to the World Series, which they won.

John Gregory Dunne was no doubt correct to observe recently in the *New Yorker* that DiMaggio would not have achieved the same fame had he played for St. Louis, Cleveland, or Detroit. New York had its own cachet. With its heavy concentration of high-powered sportswriters working the then more than twelve city dailies, DiMaggio's every move was chronicled in highly colored prose. Besides, television was not yet on the job when DiMaggio entered the majors, exposing players day in and out, subjecting them to inevitably disappointing interviews, everywhere erasing whatever aura their on-the-field performance might bring. The burden of description was left to sportswriters and radio announcers, who could make a duel between, say, DiMaggio and the Cleveland fastball pitcher Bob Feller seem like a battle between Achilles and Hector.

Along with all this, DiMaggio had somehow, as Cramer notes, "grown into his face." He became—with his gap-toothed smile and wide nostrils—if not handsome, then, in a masculine version of the *jolie-laide*, a "beautiful-ugly" man. In the realm of sobriquets, he also had two of the best: Joltin' Joe (for his hitting) and The Yankee Clipper, which felicitously suggested his stately presence in the ocean that was centerfield in Yankee Stadium. A great sobriquet requires a definite article—Red Grange had The Galloping Ghost; Ted Williams, The Splendid Splinter; George Herman Ruth, The Babe—and The Yankee Clipper seemed a perfect fit.

Raw to the point of being a rube when he came up, DiMaggio did not take long to learn how to fulfill the role of a quiet hero, the epitome of grace under pressure. Although he played as hard as anyone going, he never caused consternation afield by arguing with umpires, badgering opponents, or getting into fights. When an otherwise obscure Brooklyn Dodger outfielder named Al Gionfriddo made an amazing catch on a ball DiMaggio expected to be a World Series home run, DiMaggio, already rounding the bases, kicked the bag at second, an incident so out of character that it is remembered even now. In press interviews he gave little away, and if he had any secrets, the press was not yet devoted to uncovering and exposing them. His taciturnity translated itself as reticent dignity. He came off as a gent: a Hemingway hero in Yankee pinstripes.

Such, at any rate, did The Clipper appear from the outside.

RICHARD BEN CRAMER proposes to show us the less than elegant inside. Not to put too fine a point on it, *DiMaggio* makes Joe out to be a drip, a jerk, a bore, and a creep, with nothing good to be said about him off the baseball field. At one point, early in the book, Toots Shor, whose most honored customers included Jack Dempsey, Ernest Hemingway, and Joe DiMaggio, is quoted offering a definition of class—"a thing," says Toots, "where a guy does everything decent." In Richard Ben Cramer's pages, Joe DiMaggio does almost nothing decent. He is a bad father, a worse husband, a poor friend, a cheapskate, selfish, humorless, a prude operating on a sexual double standard, a solipsist of the highest order.

In his bachelor days, Cramer tells us, DiMaggio was happy to dance between the sheets with any woman who was ready and willing; and, fame being a great aphrodisiac, more than a few were. He was a guest (nonpaying, surely) at the cat-house of Polly Adler, *madame extraordinaire* and author of *A House Is Not A Home*, where he complained that the

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shiny sheets did not allow him to get enough traction. As did most bachelors of the day, he referred to women as "broads," though in their company he tended to be quite formal. In later years, he was known (here comes the double standard) to send male friends home for a change of clothes if they showed up in mixed company at restaurants neglecting to wear a jacket and tie.

That Joe was not much of a husband also appears on the bill of complaint. What he was, was a husband on the Sicilian model. He married his first wife, an actress named Dorothy Arnold, in 1939, in a wedding in San Francisco that required police crowd control. They had a son, Joe, Jr. Conflict did not take long to get under way. The new Mrs. DiMaggio wanted both her marriage and a career in the movies. Joe did not see much point in the latter. Something had to give, and soon enough the marriage did.

In the middle of this marriage, DiMaggio had his 56-game hitting streak, still unsurpassed in the majors, which ran from May 15 to July 17, 1941, when it was stopped in Cleveland by a negligible pitcher named Al Smith. (The next day he began a streak that lasted for an additional fifteen.) Once under way, the streak put him in the headlines every day, taking people's mind off the war in Europe. His teammate Lefty Gomez said, "He seemed like a figure, a hero, that the whole country could root for." And they did, except at home; in 1944 his wife sued for divorce, charging mental cruelty. Translation: indifference.

DI MAGGIO'S SECOND marriage, to Marilyn Monroe, has been more exhaustively chronicled than the relationship between Romeo and Juliet. When they first met, she, sweet ditz, was perhaps the only person in the country who had never heard of him. He had been out of the majors for a few years, and their courtship put him back in the headlines. "They are folk heroes, Marilyn and Joe," wrote the sports columnist Jimmy Cannon, "a whole country's pets." They were the best athlete and the sexiest girl, the king and queen of the prom, with the whole nation as high school. They married in 1954, when she was twenty-seven, he thirty-nine. They had only their fame in common.

The marriage was unrelieved hell. She thought he did not care enough about her career; he was jealous and discouraged by her willingness to play the national bimbo. On their honeymoon in Japan, she went off to entertain the troops in Korea. Lots of other men were always sniffing around. She was rumored to wear no underwear, and then, in the famous photograph of her skirt blowing up while she stood on an air grate for the movie *The Seven-Year Itch*, she showed the entire world that this was not so. Joe was on the set the day the scene was shot. Cramer quotes the director Billy Wilder, who recalls "the look of death" on his face. Murder may have been more like it. He roughed her up that night, and three weeks later she filed for divorce. The marriage lasted nine months. "I suppose no one," Oscar Levant quipped at the time, "can be expected to excel at two national pastimes."

The children of the famous do not, for the most part, have uncomplicatedly joyous lives, and Cramer, by more than implication, accuses DiMaggio of making things even worse for his son by being an indifferent father. To be the child, especially the son and namesake, of Joe DiMaggio, and not oneself a good athlete, was to draw a very difficult card in life. Joe, Jr.'s second bad card was being the child of divorce. Prep school, Yale, the Marines, businesses his father set him up in, connections he made for him—nothing seemed to work. He lapsed into drink and drugs, and ended up a middle-aged man with a gray ponytail and false teeth. Left an annual stipend of $20,000 in his father's will, Joe, Jr. died of an overdose of heroin and crack cocaine six months after his father's death in 1999.

That $20,000 stipend leads inexorably to the subject of DiMaggio's cheapness, about which Cramer rattles on endlessly. We are told about the hanger-on who gave him a free Cadillac, to which his response was, "Did you fill it with gas?"; about his habit of carrying his wash to a local laundromat because the machines were fifteen cents cheaper than in the building where he had a free condominium; about how, apart from a single check for $100, he never gave anything to the Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood, Florida, where he lived out his last years; and, especially, about how he was disinclined to pick up any restaurant check—he was after all known as The Yankee Clipper, not The Yankee Tipper—or in fact pay for anything, even though he had millions tucked away, including a safe-deposit box jammed with $100 bills.

The final major item Cramer puts on DiMaggio's rap sheet is his connection with the mob. The Boys, as we used to call them in Chicago, cultivated the great Italian hero. Every time he went into one of the Boys' restaurants or nightclubs, which in those days included most places in New York, they put a couple of hundred dollars in a special account for him in the old Bowery Bank. One of Joe's greatest patrons among the Boys was not an Italian but a Jew named Abner "Longy" Zwillman, who,

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Cramer claims, gave DiMaggio three boxes of cash to stash for him before he was murdered—money that DiMaggio later rescued from his house in San Francisco during the earthquake of 1989.

WHEN MATERIAL of this kind comes up in *DiMaggio*, one especially feels the want of footnotes. Where did Cramer get all this dish? Pete Hamill, the veteran New York journalist, has suggested in a review that Cramer probably got it from third-level mafiosi, adding that "mob guys, particularly low-level hoodlums, are notorious bullshit artists." But even if it were all true, it is unclear how else DiMaggio was supposed to behave. Tell Longy Zwillman and the others that he was too high-principled to accept their kindness? Nothing, after all, was ever asked of him, nor does Cramer claim that DiMaggio was ordered to appear in mob-owned places, let alone do anything that was against the law. Was he supposed to have been saintly enough—or perhaps brave enough—to turn down the money, which was not even handed over directly?

The fact seems to be that the Boys were no less caught up in the mystique of Joe DiMaggio than everyone else. Whenever he flew, American Airlines upgraded him into first-class, assigning him a seat, D5, corresponding to his initial and his old Yankee uniform number. Throughout his life, DiMaggio had guys to run his errands, do his bidding, smooth the way for him. He never asked favors; he didn't have to. Toots Shor, Jimmy Cannon, a man-about-town ticket agent named George Solotaire, a foot surgeon named Rocky Positano, and others rushed to do them for him. They did so not because he commanded or conned them, but because they wanted to—because their friendship with The Clipper came to seem the most significant thing in their lives.

As for his cheapness, even Cramer does allow that DiMaggio picked up checks when out with his teammates. So if any principle was in operation here, it would seem to be that he let people pay who were themselves making a profit by being with him, of whom there were more than a few. If Joe DiMaggio ate in your restaurant, lived in your condominium complex, wore the clothes you manufactured, such would be the rush of other people wanting to do likewise that it all meant money, fairly serious money, in the bank. Because of the magic of his name, and the even greater magic of his presence, he was visited by a plague of leeches all his life. The last seventy or so pages of *DiMaggio* showcase the work in this line of a Florida attorney named Morris Engelberg, who eventually sold, through Sotheby's, DiMaggio's canceled checks, license plate (DiMag5), MasterCard, driver's license, hundreds of signed baseballs, shirts, and other paraphernalia, and just about everything but the tumor in his lung that killed him.

"I'M NOT great," DiMaggio told the writer Gay Talese in 1966, attempting to put off a request for an interview, pleading to be left alone. "I'm just a man trying to get along." Years later, when first acquainted with the lines from Paul Simon's song "Mrs. Robinson"—"Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio?/A nation turns its lonely eyes to you"—he is supposed to have responded, "I haven't gone anywhere. I'm employed." Yet if he was not the deep creep presented by Cramer, neither will it do to make him out to be just a dumb jock. He was more complicated than that.

Although a lousy husband, for example, DiMaggio proved an excellent ex-husband to Marilyn Monroe. He looked after her as best he could, coming to her aid whenever needed. This was fairly often, for she needed a lot of looking after, not least when she landed in Payne Whitney for mental problems and he bailed her out. He always despised Frank Sinatra and Peter Lawford for pimping her, and the Kennedy brothers, John and Bobby, for treating her like a whore. Cramer reports that Joe and Marilyn planned to remarry, and when she was found dead in her apartment in 1962 an unfinished letter to him lay beside her body. He went to his own grave believing they—"the fucking Kennedys," as a friend reported him calling them—had killed her.

Nowhere did DiMaggio seem so gallant, or so tragic, as in the aftermath of Marilyn Monroe's death, when he stepped in to take care of all the details of the funeral, seeing that it was conducted in dignified privacy and arranging that fresh roses be sent to her crypt every two weeks "forever." At the time, I remarked on the impressiveness of this to a friend of mine who happened to know Arthur Miller, who was Monroe's husband after her divorce from DiMaggio. According to my friend, Miller had said DiMaggio used to beat her up fairly regularly. "You know," my friend added, "brutality is often the other side of sentimentality."

Only two beatings of Marilyn Monroe by DiMaggio are recorded in Cramer's biography, however. I say "only" and "however" because, such is the relentlessness of his attack, if he had known about more he would surely have reported them. Nor, for all his digging in secret sexual places, is

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Cramer able to report any instances of DiMaggio fooling with another man's wife. Monroe herself, when asked later if Joe hit her, said, "Yes, but not without cause." And she is not the only one who has ever wanted to come to DiMaggio's defense, or to find extenuating circumstances for his behavior. Any reader of *DiMaggio* will feel much the same way.

Henry Kissinger, whose admiration for DiMaggio began at age ten, when he watched him play in Yankee stadium, and who later became a friend, has said: "If you had told me in 1938 that I would be Secretary of State, and I would be friends with DiMaggio, I would have thought that the second was less likely than the first." At *Time* magazine's 75th anniversary dinner, when they wanted DiMaggio to sit at the head table with President Clinton, he refused. He despised the Kennedys as sexual predators, and he despised Clinton on the same grounds. He sat instead with Kissinger and his wife.

In most contests between a biographer and his subject—and contests they often come to seem—it is difficult not to find yourself rooting for the subject. The reason is that the contest is an inherently unfair one, for the biographer has not only hindsight but can bring virtue—if he pretends to it—to bear on his side.

Richard Ben Cramer, cool and with-it though he strains to be, plays the virtue card throughout. If DiMaggio uses the word "broad," or cannot make a go of marriages to two very difficult women, he is a misogynist (a touch of political correctness thrown in at no extra charge). If he fails to tell members of the mob to stick it in their ears, he is practically a member of the mafia himself. If his son does not turn out to be an astrophysicist, he is a rotten father.

In scoring off DiMaggio in all these various ways, in smoking him inside, Cramer's own position is implicitly one of moral superiority. But if the biographer is the morally superior man, why does he seem so much less interesting than his subject and finally so unconvincing? The short answer is that his moral superiority exists only on paper.

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My Jeremiah

Jacob Sloan

"JEREMIAH!" I suddenly called out to everyone's surprise, including my own.

We were a group of old friends, passing the time of day in a cafeteria in southwest Florida. It was I who, in a lull in our desultory conversation, had suggested we play a parlor game of our adolescence: which character in history, living or dead, do you admire most? Who would you like to have been?

And now I was also the first to speak up. Apparently I had had someone in mind all along, and had both created and seized an opportunity to name him. But of all people—Jeremiah! The name has such odious connotations in ordinary speech: a Jeremiah is "a person who is pessimistic about the present and foresees a calamitous future." Why should I invoke *that* depressing spirit?

My friends looked at me askance. If I had said Abraham Lincoln, or Albert Einstein, or Mother Teresa (with whom my wife had actually spent a day when we were living in Calcutta in the 70's), or Mahatma Gandhi ("I would be friends with God, acquaintances with men"), or Freud, my choice would have made sense. These were famous people, makers and shakers of our world. But "who was Jeremiah?," one of our company asked simply.

"He was a prophet in the Bible," I answered.

"Where in the Bible?"

"In the Book of Jeremiah." My glib response drew a laugh, and that was that. No one pursued my lead, no one asked what Jeremiah was to me that I should have fixed on him as my favorite figure in history. Maybe they were uneasy with the choice of a biblical character—it disturbed the separation of church and state, or reminded them somehow of the parlous nature of our democracy. In any case we soon went back to our coffee and buns and casual conversation about friends and enemies, parties and movements we had belonged to or outgrown or broken with in the past, experiences and adventures or misadventures in sundry places. Solemnly we agreed that the world was going down the drain. The usual platitudes in the tranquility of sunny, senior Florida.

BUT JEREMIAH has stayed with me. For it was he who first spoke the lines that have coursed through my head almost, it seems, forever, or at least since I was fourteen years old—lines that I have often repeated with gusto:

> If running against men on foot has
> wearied thee, how wilt thou race
> against horses?
> Let that man be like the cities which
> the Lord relentlessly overthrew.
> The fathers ate unripe grapes, and the
> children's teeth are set on edge.

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These bitter words I had learned by heart in the original Hebrew. And there is another outstanding passage that still moves me, although it sounds a very different note:

> In Ramah is heard the sound of mourning,
> of bitter weeping. Rachel mourns her
> children, she refuses to be consoled
> because her children are no more. . . .
> Thus says the Lord:
> Cease your cries of mourning, wipe the
> tears from your eyes.
> The sorrow you have shown shall have a
> reward, says the Lord.
> They shall return from the enemies' land.
> There is hope for your future, says the Lord.
> Your children shall return to their own
> borders.

Powerful words, these, of hope and consolation; and yet I admit that my memory is more apt to dwell on the prophet's angry anguish over the destined spoliation of his people than on his rejoicing at their anticipated redemption. On most days I am neither a Zionist nor a transcendentalist, but rather aspire to the lofty stoicism of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius: "The art of life is more like the wrestler's art than the dancer's, in respect of this, that it should stand ready and firm to meet onsets that are sudden and unexpected." Such is my secret aspiration. Of course, in reality I am rarely able to practice the wrestler's art, to set my legs against the sudden and unexpected onsets of life. I am never ready. Rather, I tend like the dancer to shift my weight from leg to leg in a tremulous balancing act. Hence, I suppose, I trembled at the justice of Jeremiah's stern invective. Like the people of the kingdom of Judah, I must secretly have been aware that my own sin was "written with an iron stylus, engraved with a diamond point on the tablet of [my] heart."

Evidently it has always been so with me. A poem that I wrote for my college magazine bore the epigraph: "Call the professional mourners—Jeremiah." I am sure that many of my fellow students, poor collegians much like myself in the Depression 30's, read this as a call for the burial of decadent capitalism. But it was not. Though my prospects for a job were as slim as anyone's, I shied from Communist and fellow-traveling propaganda, open or covert, and it was not a party line of the 1930's but a frenzied prophecy of the 6th century B.C.E. that dominated my lyrical and social imagination. "Awake and Sing," the leftist playwright Clifford Odets urgently cried in those days; but I had heard a very different song, and one far more "socially significant." It had reverberated in my ears since I first heard it in the oddest of places: a self-study summer camp funded by a Hebrew high school in the out-of-the way commuter town of Arverne, Long Island.

At the beginning I did not appreciate the camp's didactic philosophy, spending my time instead playing baseball and learning to swim. But on my third day I was called before a stern-faced and old-fashioned teacher who wanted to know why I had not handed in units one and two of my syllabus. I looked at him in astonishment, but, a docile if bright student, kept silent; I did not argue with teachers.

Then the old man hit me below the belt, saying that he had known my father, who had died two years before, and that *he* would have been very disturbed at my misbehavior. This was not strictly true: whenever it rained, Poppa used to excuse me from the progressive religious school where he taught and which I attended in the afternoons. But now I had no alternative: though I wanted to play, I would have to study an hour or two every morning. Resignedly, I opened the self-study curriculum and found that the units began with the Book of Jeremiah.

The first three verses of chapter one were a bore, a prosy recitation of dates and kings and genealogies—history as it was taught in public school:

> The words of Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah, of a priestly family in Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin. The word of the Lord first came to me in the days of Josiah, son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign, and continued through the reign of Jehoiakin, son of Josiah, king of Judah.

And so forth. Who cared? But verse four, the "call of Jeremiah," grabbed my attention. This was the very matter of my dreams, asleep and awake: what was to be my calling? The boy Jeremiah is actually told, directly, by God, what he is to do with his life. The future for which he has been chosen is harsh but exciting: "The word of the Lord came to me thus: / Before you were born I dedicated you, / A prophet to the nations I / appointed you." The boy Jeremiah hesitates (and I with him): "Ah, Lord God, I said, / I know not how to speak. I am too young." God reassures him: "Say not I am too young, / To whomever I send you you shall speak. / Have no fear before them, / Because I am with you to deliver you, / says the Lord."

I had no idea what a prophet's mission was. It seemed hazardous—why else would God reassure him in advance? A prophet has to go where he is

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told, to speak what he is commanded, and not to be afraid. But what is he to speak?

> Then the Lord extended his hand and
> touched my mouth, saying:
> See, I place my words in your mouth!
> This day I set you
> Over nations and over kingdoms,
> To root up and to tear down,
> To destroy and demolish,
> To build and to plant.

Tremendous, the things that young Jeremiah and I were to accomplish by the power of words. And what words! Strange images follow, each with a special significance. Jeremiah is shown a "branch of the watching tree," meaning that God watches to fulfill His word; a boiling cauldron that appears from the north, meaning that God was summoning all the kingdoms of the north to lay siege to Judah. But why? What had the people of Judah done to deserve this impending calamity? Frankly, I found their crime—"burning incense to strange gods, and adoring their handiwork"—not so horrendous. I had read all about the Greek gods and goddesses, who were like ordinary human beings, and although I knew that the God of Israel was *one* God, and there was no other, still, the pagan gods were . . . lively!

Nevertheless, not only was our one God the living God, but He spoke in wonderfully poetic language; and language, in those days, was *my* god. So I eagerly accepted God's mission to Jeremiah, and welcomed His promise of protection:

> For it is I this day
> Who have made you a fortified city,
> a pillar of iron, a wall of brass
> against the whole land:
> against Judah's kings and princes,
> against its priests and people.
> They will fight against you, but not
> prevail over you,
> For I am with you to deliver you.

So my mission (like young Jeremiah's) was to oppose the powers that be—a mission no teenager could refuse. I would be sorely tested, but with God's irresistible speech behind me, how could I not reply as the child Samuel did in the temple of Shiloh: "Here am I, O Lord, for Thou hast called me"? When next I visited my teacher and rehearsed chapter one, reading the original verse by verse and paraphrasing it in my schoolboy Hebrew, he was visibly pleased. He urged me to go on; I did so with pleasure; we met conscientiously several times a week. Soon I began to understand why God was so angry at the people of Judah. The image that recurred was that of infidelity: like bad women, the Israelites had betrayed their husband, God, Who had brought them through the desert, the "land unsown."

At the time, I assumed that this image was not meant to be taken literally. Not until many years later was I to grasp the full complexity of the matter: the prophet was referring to actual practices associated with the gods of Canaan, practices performed by the Israelites as part of their pagan idolatry. They were sinning, in short, not only against the social culture of the Jewish God but also against the moral instinct that Kant called conscience.

MY STAY at camp was limited to one month—my family could not afford the full season—and I went home with Jeremiah's stern accusations, his vivid images, his magnificent rhetoric ringing in my ears:

> Be amazed at this, O heavens,
> And shudder with sheer horror, says the
> Lord.
> Two evils have My people done:
> They have forsaken Me, the source of
> living waters;
> They have dug themselves cisterns,
> Broken cisterns that hold no water.

In public school I gladly chanted Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life," with its cheerful assertion that "Lives of great men all remind us / We can make our lives sublime / And departing leave behind us / Footprints on the sands of time." Yet these and other onward-and-upward examples of the American Dream, however appealing to my developing ego, faded before Jeremiah's broken cisterns that hold no water.

Jeremiah had forearmed me, indeed, against both the "allrightniks" and the "allwrongniks" of the 1930's. Reading the *Saturday Evening Post* in the subway to and from school, I luxuriated in its inane pleasantries. But mindful of the gray faces on streets filled with the unemployed, the despondent subway crowds, I could not shake the prophet's disdainful mockery of those "who cry peace, peace, when there is no peace." By the same token, the hopes aroused by the false red prophets of a workers' utopia turned sour when I recalled my own prophet's derision of those whose faith lay in that "broken reed, Egypt," whence their forefathers had fled after 400 years of servitude.

Was that why, so many years later, I cried "Jere-

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miah!" when asked whom I most admired and would most want to emulate? If so, it must have been with the painful regret that accompanies all failed longings for fulfillment. For I could never have summoned what it took for the prophet to proclaim what he proclaimed, or have borne being thrust as he was into a pit of slime (according to the report of Josephus in his *Antiquities of the Jews* written six centuries later). And not just because of the sheer strength required to fulfill his mission. I could never have had the *heart* to undertake it, knowing (as he certainly knew) that it was an impossible one.

But this requires some background. Jeremiah's extraordinary commitment, his driven insistence, was to counsel, publicly as well as privately, a policy that we in our time would call appeasement. It was a policy he had the effrontery to urge upon the successive kings of Judah who are named seriatim in that very first chapter of his book, starting with Josiah, son of Amon. This was the famous saintly Josiah who had "pleased the Lord and conducted himself unswervingly just as his ancestor David had done" (in the words of the second Book of Kings). But more significant than Josiah's legendary piety was the supposedly serendipitous discovery during his reign of the Book of the Law—presumably a (lost) copy of the same code that Moses had elaborated from the Ten Commandments and encompassed in the fifth book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy.

We smile: we cannot conceive of a copy of the British Magna Carta or our American Constitution disappearing from sight for 700 years. Clearly this was meant to signify a turning point in the social and religious life of the people of Judah, and one with deep political connotations. The entire country had sunk so deep in idolatry, had so entirely assimilated the vices of its pagan neighbors, that the people had completely lost the source of their uniqueness—their special, incomparable relation to the one God Who had led them from Egyptian slavery to the revelation at the foot of Mount Sinai. It is in this light that Jeremiah's thunderous prophecies assume enormous political as well as social resonance—and that his life and work can be viewed as a mirror of our own times, at the beginning of the third millennium, in a culture performing the same practices the prophet had abominated 2,500 years before: the same promiscuous sexuality, the same sweet incense offered up to the idols of ego.

In context, Jeremiah's mission was undertaken more or less at the moment when Josiah initiated his "Deuteronomic reform," which was itself made possible by a weakening of the hold over the Middle East exercised by the Assyrians, then torn by civil war. By the time of Josiah's death a decade or so later, Assyria's place as a world power had been taken by Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. In a revolt led by Josiah's son Jehoiakin, Jerusalem was captured by these Babylonians, and many of its prominent citizens, including the prophet, were taken into exile. In a summary account, the editors of the *New American Bible* tell what happened next:

> Jeremiah urged the next king, Zedekiah, to refrain from joining . . . in another revolt. Weak and easily swayed, Zedekiah secretly consulted Jeremiah but publicly sided against him. In July 587 B.C.E. the Babylonians stormed the city and a month later burned Jerusalem with its Temple to the ground. After the king witnessed the slaughter of his sons, the Babylonians blinded him and carried him off to oblivion.
>
> Jeremiah was treated well by the Babylonians, probably because he persistently spoke against revolt. The Babylonians gave him a choice either of enjoying a palace in Babylon or remaining behind in the land. He chose the latter. When the remnant in Jerusalem rejected his advice and fled to Egypt, they dragged the prophet with them. There Jeremiah died, to become a tradition and a book.

Omitted in this account is Jeremiah's final ignominy, related toward the end of his book. It is a terrible admission of the failure of his mission. For even in Egypt, the attractive pagan idolatry that he had warned would be the downfall of Judah continued openly and unashamedly. Once again, Jeremiah's warning fell on deaf ears. Worse, it met unequivocal rejection. In the translation of the *New American Bible*:

> From all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to strange gods, from all the women who were present in the immense crowd, and from all the people who lived in lower Egypt, Jeremiah received this answer: we will not listen to what you say in the name of the Lord. Rather we will continue doing what we proposed; we will burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out libations to her, as we and our fathers, our kings and princes, have done in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem.

And so Jeremiah died in Egypt. The prophet who had been without honor in his own country died without honor abroad as well.

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IN THE centuries since his death, Jeremiah, rejected by his people, has been welcomed in the canon of the Hebrew Bible as one of the three major prophets (the other two being Isaiah and Ezekiel). His speeches, transcribed by his epigone Baruch, and emulated by the minor prophet Zechariah, are studied to this day. He is held up as an exemplary figure who defied the corruption of his age, both political and spiritual. And not by Jews alone: in the Christian imagination, too, he is linked with the prophet Elijah and John the Baptist as one who defied earthly kings, and he also joins Isaiah as the most quoted prognosticator of the messiah to come.

But why does he continue to occupy the background of *my* inner life after all these years, even, or especially in, the relaxed placidity of southwest Florida? Certainly, the powerful language is a factor. But what else? His prophecy of doom? Having never enlisted in the ranks of utopian social-political idealists, I have consequently never had to regret the collapse of those hopes. His own failure, perhaps, which reminds me of the inevitable insufficiency of even the best of men? His implicit denial of the illusion of progress, an illusion so easily and so commonly affirmed? The momentary comfort he provides in the face of the sure knowledge that our leaders will be playing golf when next the bombs rain down?

Only God knows: and, as we New Yorkers used to jest in our sardonic youth, He ain't talking.

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OBSERVATIONS

The Journalists & the Palestinians

Fiamma Nirenstein

THE INFORMATION coming out of Israel these days is heavily influenced by the political imagination of the reporters and columnists and cameramen who have flocked to the scene from the four corners of the earth to cover this latest installment of violence in the ongoing Middle East conflict. They tend—they are *expected*—to place those clashes within an agreed-upon framework: the framework, roughly, of David (the Palestinians) versus Goliath (the Israelis). It is only when they fail to follow this paradigm that they, their editors, and their readers or viewers become confused.

And no wonder. Imagine a weary journalist, getting back to his office or press room in Jerusalem at the end of a hard day: how is he to begin describing what he has seen? The events he must try to present are, in truth, terribly complicated, and, when it comes to an informed perspective, he himself is often wet behind the ears. As for the subtle interplay between what in the swirl of events is cause and what is effect, between the norms of Western and Eastern civilizations, between democracy and dictatorship, between the Judeo-Christian world and the world of Islam—all this gets lost in the confusion of daily armed clashes and terror bombings, so alien to the normal rhythms of normal societies.

And so, like the morning mists that envelop the city of Jerusalem, the reality of the situation often dissipates into a fog made up of the psychological impulses and fixed ideas of those observing it. From an elevated spot like the suburb of Gilo, where I happen to live, the local geography does in fact sometimes disappear in the mist, and Jerusalem itself can seem transformed into a white lake. My neighbors and I are left only with the explosions of firearms aimed in our direction from the nearby Arab village of Beit Jalla, and the furious responses of Israel's Apache helicopters.

And what about the view from East Jerusalem? In the Arab city, from early morning on, the international media breathe the perfumed mist of something indescribably romantic and archaic mingled with the aroma of youthful furor. In the fog, the Jerusalem of the Jews must loom in the imagination like a powerful machine, an established mass pushing with its force and its money on a weaker, newborn world. The fog offers an opportunity, a screen, against which foreign correspondents project the attitudes they came with: their reflexive critiques of capitalism, of consumerism, of globalization, even of themselves and their own societies.

The American Colony, a lovely old hotel in East Jerusalem, is home to almost all the international journalists who have come here on temporary assignment. The ancient vine-covered stone is part of the hotel's charm, and so too is its storied past, redolent of travelers' tales, of miraculous reunions after shipwrecks at sea and near-escapes in faraway climes. Above all, its charm derives from the discreetness and quiet of the remote little street where it stands, a symbol of under-

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statement amid the vertiginous passions of the surrounding environs.

Not far away runs Salah-al-Din, the central thoroughfare of Arab Jerusalem, all stores, noises, traffic jams. Here is where some of the Friday clashes take place, after morning prayers at the mosques. By evening, the restaurant at the American Colony has become packed with dusty, tired journalists, just back with their cell phones and notebooks from Gaza or Ramallah, from the areas of shooting. They are, most of them, between the ages of thirty-five and fifty, old enough to appreciate a moment of relaxation. In this comradely setting one feels the extraordinary informal power of the media—iconoclastic, sporty, ironic, virtually all of one mind.

The support crews are largely Arab, the stringers Palestinian and often the cameramen, too. The hotel waiters and staff are likewise Palestinian, as are the regular guests one runs into in the halls, left over from the time of the *intifada* of the late 1980's—the first *intifada*, the real one. The leaders of that uprising regard the American Colony as their private stomping ground, a place for keeping appointments, for conducting interviews, for jocularly confiding in foreign newsmen. An acquaintance amusedly tells me of overhearing a correspondent thanking his Palestinian source for supplying him with the precise hours of the next day's "spontaneous" clashes.

THE AMERICAN Colony—with its reassuring air of Arab refinement, the plashing of the fountain in the hotel's paradisiacal little garden where breakfast is served amid jasmine and roses, its white and blue Armenian tiles, its Eastern touches adjusted to Western tastes, the friendliness of its staff cloaked in courtesy and dignity—is much more than a hostelry: it is a metaphor for the sympathy the international press harbors for the Palestinian cause and, conversely, its complex animosity toward Israel. Slightly vain, many of the guests here still bask in memories of themselves at age twenty, Arab *kaffias* around their necks, on the campuses of American or European universities: young rebels, young heroes, young upsetters of the hegemonic powers-that-be. For them, pro-Palestinian leanings are as natural, as elegant, and as correct as the American Colony's famous Saturday-morning brunch.

The culture of the press is almost entirely Left. These are people who feel the weakness of democratic values, their own values; who enjoy the frisson of sidling up to a threatening civilization that coddles them even while holding in disdain the system they represent. Twice a day the muezzin calls from the minaret right outside the wall of the hotel. Sitting by the pool, one feels very near Ramallah, only a few kilometers away, where the children sent to the head of the demonstrations are throwing stones at Israeli soldiers their own age or slightly older. The children are fixed in one's consciousness in all their touching humanity, while the Jewish inhabitants of nearby Psagot, showered with bullets nightly by Arafat's Tanzim in Ramallah, seem but so many insensate obstacles on the road to peace and justice.

Besides, "settlers," like those in Psagot, by definition can never be "victims," just as the Israeli army by definition never responds to fire but rather actively shoots at child demonstrators. BBC or CNN broadcasts begin: "Israeli helicopters attacked Beit Jalla tonight." Only then will they add: "Just before, shots from houses in the Palestinian village hit the neighborhood of Gilo." In some reports it has become customary to call Gilo itself, where 45,000 Jews dodge bullets, a "settlement"—that is, another colonial intrusion, another obstacle to peace and justice.

In the shelter of the American Colony, meanwhile, Palestinian spokesmen repeat their familiar themes of victimization and triumph, deploying the moral high cards of freedom, justice, and self-determination. Who is to question them? Because they come from an authoritarian society, they themselves are magically imbued with authority. European or American journalists pose respectful questions to representatives of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and note down their answers quite as if it were possible to investigate these statements or to check them against alternative Palestinian sources at any time. Since it is not possible, the only thing that makes news in the end is the ever-climbing number of dead and wounded. And that too is impossible to verify.

Not even the world-famous episode of the little boy killed by crossfire in Gaza, whose death, captured on film, was aired ceaselessly to demonstrate the barbarity of the Jews, was subject to investigation by the world press. Although the Israeli army ultimately determined that the fatal bullet may well have originated not from the Israeli checkpoint but from one of the seven locations from which *Palestinians* were shooting, this could hardly be expected to gain traction against the idea that the child was a martyr, a *shahid*, murdered by the Jews. From the very beginning, the exact cause of his death was never considered *worth* investigating, lest it impinge on the axiom that Israel was committing "aggression against unarmed people" and causing "the daily massacre of children."

The most flagrant instance of this syndrome in action involved the journalist Ricardo Cristiano from RAI, the Italian state television network. On October 12, two Israeli reservists on their way through Ramallah were seized, beaten, lynched, and horrifically mutilated at the hands of Palestinian police and a civilian mob. PA forces on the scene promptly hunted down and confiscated film and videotape of the incident to prevent its being aired—

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but not before a crew from a private Italian TV channel managed to send a clip of the atrocity to Rome that was soon broadcast around the world. Thereupon Cristiano published a letter of apology in the official Palestinian daily, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*. In it, he explained that he and RAI were not the ones at fault; blamed the misdeed on his colleagues at Mediaset, owned by Italy's right-wing opposition leader Silvio Berlusconi; reiterated his commitment to "respect" the "rules" laid down by the Palestinian Authority—rules that presumably prohibit anti-PA reporting; and promised to bend every effort to prevent similar images being shown in the future.

A more explicit statement of fealty, or a more outrageous violation of journalistic integrity, can scarcely be imagined. Yet, with one or two honorable exceptions, the reaction was muted both in Italy and elsewhere. Cristiano himself went back to Rome, and neither the directors of RAI nor its owners—that is, the Italian government—seemed to feel the need for further explanation. As for the community of journalists in Israel, at most they bestirred themselves to blame both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government for creating difficulties for the working press, with one Dutch correspondent taking the occasion to accuse the Israeli army, preposterously, of shooting at journalists.

But what else could be expected of a profession that does not even appear to know that it has struck a pact with Palestinian censorship? Every day, the "rules" that Cristiano declared he "respected" find a positive echo in the hearts of those who somehow cannot bring themselves to film, or to air, images of shooting by Tanzim or Palestinian police who have been positioned in the farther ranks of the demonstrating mobs, behind the stone-throwing children in the front rows. For such images would violate the tacit agreement by which Palestinians are to be seen always as victims, Israelis always as aggressors.

THE STANCE of the media is, at bottom, simple. The reasons behind it, however, are complex. Not least among them, tragically, is the stance Israel takes toward itself. It is a country many of whose elites are insupportably suffused with a sense of guilt, lacerated by historical revisionism, starved for world sympathy, scarred by too many wars. Nowhere are the wounds more visible than in Israel's own press.

Just recently, the weekend insert of *Ha'aretz*, the country's equivalent of the *New York Times*, featured three main articles. The first, replete with a devastating caricature, focused on Ehud Ya'ari, a veteran television commentator who specializes in diplomatic and military matters and who happens to be less than enamored of Yasir Arafat; in it, this generally sensible and well-informed observer was accused of harboring a pathological antipathy that invalidated his right to speak as a professional commentator on Palestinian affairs. The second article was devoted to interviews with Palestinian mothers; but instead of asking why they send their underage children out to die—or at least why they do not prevent them from going—the author drew from their testimony of selfless dedication a profound and heartrending lesson that Israeli women in particular needed to heed. In the third, pilots who had taken part in helicopter attacks on Palestinian police headquarters after the lynching of the Israeli soldiers in Ramallah were invited to share their feelings; they duly voiced their remorse over any civilian casualties that might have occurred. (Like most citizens of advanced democratic countries, Israelis have a real horror of war and of killing in war.)

Even the army seems to lack the conviction to justify itself, thus reinforcing the impression that Israel is in the wrong and on the defensive. At a press briefing, one high-level general ruled out the possibility that anything could be done effectively to deter Arab aggression. The problem, he said, was technical: Palestinian civilians have been mixed in with riflemen, and so far the army has been at a loss to deal with this particular battle tactic. Not once did he state for the benefit of the assembled newsmen that (quite apart from such practical questions) Israel has an absolute right to protect itself against violence directed at its citizens and soldiers. By contrast, Palestinian spokesmen like Hanan Ashrawi or Ziad abu Ziad or Saeb Erekat never miss an opportunity to begin their story from the top: this is our land, and ours alone, and the Jews who are occupying it are employing armed force against an unarmed people.

This, incidentally, may help explain, though it hardly excuses, the press's growing habit of viewing all of Israel as contested territory, not to mention its total lack of interest in Israel's painful and ultimately useless efforts over the last years to make territorial concessions to Arafat and the PLO. That, for example, in the latest negotiations at Camp David, Barak offered 92 percent of the West Bank, a sizable portion of Jerusalem, and a formula for international control of the Temple Mount seems to have done little to change the impression that Israel's "occupation" of age-old Arab lands is not a contingent fact rooted in particular historical circumstances but an innate character trait of the Jewish state, which *in its entirety* sits on "conquered Palestinian territory."

Occluded in this version of history, history as seen from the American Colony hotel, is the reality that Jerusalem is the established capital of the state of Israel, and that Hebrew, not Arabic or English, is the prevailing tongue in its streets. Only "in Jewish tradition," as Palestinian spokesmen like to put it, meaning in the imagination of the Jews, is the

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Temple Mount the site where the First and Second Temples stood. By such creeping semantic falsities, exactly as in the textbooks studied by Palestinian children, does the historical legitimacy of the Jewish presence in Jerusalem and Israel become, itself, a matter of contention.

It is difficult to believe that Israel's efforts to defend its actions before world opinion—necessary as such efforts are, weak and apologetic as they have been—can change matters in this respect, at least not in the short term. It is not just that we are talking about a profession, the world press, that is almost entirely uniform in its attitudes. The truth is that Israel, as the Jewish state, is also the object of a contemporary form of anti-Semitism that is no less real for being masked or even unconscious. (Arab Holocaust-denial, more violent and vulgar than anything in the West, is rarely if ever touched on in the mainstream media.)

And there is something else as well: looking into the heart of Arab regimes, preeminently including that of the Palestinians themselves, is simply too disturbing. For what one is liable to find there are disproportionate measures of religious and/or political fanaticism, bullying, corruption, lies, manipulation, and a carefully nurtured cult of victimhood that rationalizes every cruelty. On the streets and at the checkpoints, among the ardent, stone-throwing youths facing the armed might of the Israeli "aggressor," it is possible for a newsman to forget such discordant realities; at the American Colony, it goes without saying, they are never allowed to intrude.

ART

Art by the Yard

Steven C. Munson

IN THE Woody Allen movie *Hannah and Her Sisters*, a meeting takes place between a serious artist and a newly minted super-rich rock star looking for art to buy. The artist, with some reluctance, has agreed to display some of his exquisite small-scale nudes, executed in pencil and paper, for his prospective customer. But the rock star has just bought a house in the Hamptons and has a lot of empty walls to fill. "I need something big, something really big, got anything really big?" he asks. To which the annoyed artist replies, "I am not in the habit of selling my work by the yard!"

In this case, the difference between an untutored collector—someone who buys art for essentially the same reason that he might buy wall coverings—and a connoisseur—someone whose interest is motivated by appreciation of the art object itself—is dramatized to amusing effect. But the distinction is important, and it is especially relevant today, when buying, selling—and creating—works of art "by the yard" has become commonplace, and when size and cost, rather than aesthetic quality, often seem to be the chief determinants of value.

The subordination of connoisseurship is the subject of a recent book by the art dealer Richard Feigen. *Tales from the Art Crypt** is a collection of illuminating reminiscences of Feigen's experiences with artists, other dealers, museums, scholars, and collectors over the past five decades. Loosely organized and written in a charmingly direct and digressive style, the stories wander from Chicago and New York, where Feigen opened his art galleries in 1957 and 1963 respectively, to Paris, London, Rome, and various other places where business called.

Feigen embarked on his career out of a passion for collecting beautiful objects; he had begun acquir-

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ing paintings at the age of twelve. The intensity and delight of this passion are evident in a chapter titled "Detective Stories," where he describes how he gradually realized and subsequently set out to prove that an early 17th-century painting he had purchased for himself, *Saint Denis Frightening His Executioners with His Head*, could not have been painted by the artist to which it was attributed, Filippo Napolitano, but was in fact a lost original by the French master Nicolas Poussin; how, from a catalogue reproduction, he sensed that *The Prophet Elijah*, a work attributed to a minor 15th-century Florentine named Toscani, was actually by someone else (who turned out to be the young Fra Angelico); and how, poking around an antique shop in the English Cotswolds, he spotted what was later deemed an autograph work by the 17th-century Bolognese landscapist, Domenichino.

In all these instances, what triggered Feigen's response was his gift for connoisseurship. As he describes it:

> The most dependable way to figure out who painted a picture is to have an "eye"—to have taste, that ability to enter an artist's head, to see what he saw, to understand what he intended, as well as the intellectual climate of a period in history, to sense the age of materials like canvas or panel or pigment. Few people really have this flair. Although it has to be trained and honed, an "eye" seems to be born, not made.

It is difficult to quarrel with this statement; yet one can be sure it would raise hackles among many people both within and without the art world. For one thing, it is explicitly elitist, and in precisely the way that egalitarians, especially in America, find objectionable: in its assertion of the natural superiority of certain individuals over others. And from this assertion follows the (no less offensive) corollary that, just as some men and women are better suited than others to becoming connoisseurs, so there are things, in addition to the identification of the provenance of a work of art, about which connoisseurship can tell us: how, and how well, a work has been executed in terms of the artist's apparent purpose; how one responds to it and why; how it can be placed in relation to other works by the same hand or by others; and how it can best be displayed or presented to the public.

These are the sorts of issues, involving taste, perception, knowledge, and judgment, that preoccupy curators, scholars, and scholarly dealers like Feigen just as they preoccupy certain artists, critics, and collectors. In the course of his own development, a serious artist educates his eye by studying the art, particularly the great art, that preceded him. One of the most important American painters of the 20th century, Fairfield Porter, was also one of our most gifted critics, who trained his eye by immersing himself in the art of the Italian Renaissance. Indeed, criticism itself, at its best, could be considered a form of connoisseurship-in-action.

Collectors can be connoisseurs, though often they are not; the rock star in Woody Allen's movie is far from a parody. Serious collectors often rely on artists themselves to educate and guide them. One thinks of the Havemeyers, who were introduced to French Impressionism by Mary Cassatt; the Havemeyer collection, eventually bequeathed to New York's Metropolitan Museum, became a central element of that institution's vast holdings. One thinks of Gertrude Stein and Picasso, although she may have been less of a connoisseur than her brother Michael and sister-in-law Sarah, who formed a special relationship with Matisse.

Then there are men like Herbert Lust and Albert Barnes. Lust started out as a novelist, went into business, and later became one of the premier American collectors of the works of Alberto Giacometti—at a time, the 1950's, when the sculptor was no longer fashionable. (Lust's collection was recently exhibited at the Portland Museum of Art in Maine.) Barnes made a fortune and then devoted himself to two causes: promoting racial progress and building a collection of, among other things, 19th- and 20th-century European painting and African art. At the Barnes Foundation in Merion, Pennsylvania, he arranged modern works contiguously with objects from past eras and different parts of the world, enabling comparisons that he rightly felt were critical to serious study.

Which brings us to the role played by museums as protectors of the values and standards of connoisseurship. From the time they were founded in the latter part of the 19th century, our leading museums presented art for purposes of aesthetic enjoyment, education, and the elevation of public taste—an elitist mission carried out primarily for the benefit of artists, scholars, and serious lovers of art, whether actual or prospective. Academic connoisseurship itself was born at Harvard University with the Fogg Museum course in art history, a program that trained those who went on to take charge of American museums. As Feigen puts it, "by and large, these Harvard-trained museum directors had gone into art because they loved objects, just as their brothers went into the Anglican Church because they loved God. . . . They did it because they loved the scholarly life . . . and they welcomed the chance to make their statements by building the collections and mounting exhibitions."

ALL THIS began to change in the 1970's. Under the combined pressures of an art-world economy that was beginning to be carried away by ever-rising prices and ever greater infusions of money, and of the emergence within the universities of

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Marxist-inspired ideas that challenged the very legitimacy of high culture—ideas now popularly expressed in the form of political correctness—the museums' sense of their traditional mission began to give way. At the same time, art works themselves began to be seen less and less as objects of appreciation and, in line with the radical critique of all manifestations of the West's cultural heritage, more and more as objects of power.

An extreme example of the practical consequences of these changes is the hair-raising story of the antics of Richard Glanton, an ambitious lawyer with political aspirations who got control of the board of trustees of the Barnes Foundation in the early 1990's and set about trying to sell off one of the greatest private collections of art ever accumulated in the U.S. In the end Glanton was stopped, but not before wreaking a certain amount of havoc that led to multiple lawsuits, left the foundation at odds with the local community, and violated the prohibitions against moving or loaning the collection spelled out in Albert Barnes's will. Contrary to the entire spirit in which it was created, the Barnes collection was sent on an international tour that had but two purposes: to make money for the foundation Glanton controlled and to enhance his personal stature.

Feigen provides a first-hand account of this episode, the importance of which cannot be overestimated. For what it suggests is that the raw interest in exploiting the financial potential of art has spread beyond those in the business of buying and selling to those who are in what was once thought to be the separate business of preserving and displaying. In his chapter on "The War of the Museums," Feigen describes the trend among museum boards toward hands-on, corporate-style management and a focus on the bottom line at the expense of connoisseurship. The essence of this change can be seen in the new type of director being sought by these boards, a type epitomized by Thomas Krens of New York's Guggenheim Museum:

> Under the old order, museum trustees placed confidence in the director because of his commitment to art. Krens, archetype of the new breed, commands confidence with his fluency in corporate-speak and salesmanship. . . . Krens sees museums as part of the entertainment industry, and himself as an industry "investment banker." For Krens, art is a form of entertainment. . . . The new museum is an entertainment palace, and crowds its measure of success.

This new approach is having consequences that are far from benign. Next spring, for example, the Guggenheim and Russia's State Hermitage Museum will open a mini-museum in the lobby of the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas, which already has a shopping mall, a casino, a convention center, and restaurants. According to the *New York Times*, Krens initially opposed the idea as "too tacky," but was won over by a visit to the "Gallery of Fine Art" at the Bellagio Hotel, also in Vegas, opened by casino operator Steve Wynn in 1998, which last September hosted an exhibit from the Phillips Collection of Washington, D.C. Whatever else one may say about such exhibits, it is hard to see how they can avoid devaluing the art itself by presenting it in circumstances that are hardly conducive to serious viewing.

To add to the confusion, while great works of art are being shipped out to casinos, just about anything, whether it has any connection to art or not, is now being put into museums. A current example at the Guggenheim, which not long ago put on an exhibition of motorcycles, is what the *New York Times* critic Herbert Muschamp calls "a retrospective of the Milanese fashion designer Giorgio Armani," which almost makes it sound as though Armani is somehow in the same category as an Italian Renaissance master. But Muschamp then gets to the heart of the matter:

> Mr. Armani pledged a major chunk of dough (perhaps as much as $15 million) to the Guggenheim. . . . And it has been speculated that this show was contingent on the designer's financial support, which the museum has denied. . . . [W]e'll never know whether, without his eight-figure pledge, the Guggenheim would have mounted a retrospective on the work of Giorgio Armani. Just as we'll never know whether the Metropolitan Museum would have presented a show of Cartier jewels without financial support from the House of Cartier. Or whether the Museum of Modern Art would have devoted a show to a Ferrari without support from Ferrari.

Such exhibits raise a host of questions: is it proper for museums to give over their space, no matter how much "rent" they generate in the form of contributions, to what is essentially large-scale product advertisement? How does their doing so affect the way curators view their more legitimate role? And what effect does this have on a public that is being implicitly told that musuems are not really special places anymore, places where one can enjoy a respite from "entertainment" and find, in the products of artistic temperament and aspiration, something more interesting, more memorable, and more ennobling than what one derives from products created for mass consumption?

WHETHER SUCH questions are being asked by those in charge of these institutions is not clear; what is clear is how much things have changed. As Feigen writes, "The old connoisseur museum director felt it his mission to show and teach people what they did not necessarily yet know about, to surprise and excite them with new images and ideas. He seemed to respect

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the public's intelligence. The new breed, groomed in management and fundraising, lures the public with the familiar, with gold and jeweled objects, with fashion." Alluding to the intellectual and moral pretenses involved in mounting such exhibitions, Muschamp for his part notes that "Enlightenment is a cultural institution's stock in trade. The light fades where delusion rules."

That light is beginning to fade as the quest intensifies to make museums more commercial, with more "blockbuster" shows organized around increasingly insipid but supposedly accessible themes. Surveying the recent millennium exhibits in New York City, the critic Hilton Kramer wrote that their "overkill scale . . . has left their ostensible subjects in an intellectual shambles." He called particular attention to the fact that ill-conceived shows like *The American Century* at the Whitney and the second and third installments of *MoMA 2000* at the Museum of Modern Art not only do a disservice to the cause of connoisseurship but are also leading to the "vulgarization and trivialization of . . . the museum itself."

Just how the current marketing mentality is distorting curatorial decisions is well illustrated by an example Feigen cites, an upcoming show at New York's Metropolitan Museum entitled *Orazio and Artemesia Gentileschi, Father and Daughter*:

> Philippe de Montebello, director of the Metropolitan Museum, a respected art historian and member of the vanishing breed of museum men who actually care about objects, has long recognized Orazio Gentileschi's importance and regretted the absence from the museum's collection of an example of his work. Yet when Judith Mann, a young St. Louis Museum curator, hatched the idea, dear to feminists, of the father-daughter exhibition . . . the Metropolitan . . . signed on. Artemisia's box-office appeal was irresistible. . . . In the forthcoming *Father and Daughter* exhibition, it is certainly the daughter, not the father, who will grab the headlines; the public will be fooled into thinking it was she who was the great painter; Orazio's [objectivism, which diverged from Caravaggio's emotionalism] will be obscured by Artemesia's dramatic Caravaggism; the artists Orazio influenced will be absent from the show; and finally, the loan of some 80 percent of Orazio's lifework will foreclose, for the foreseeable future, the possibility of a full-scale monographic treatment, which is urgently needed.

There is more bad news. In response to the kinds of trends decried by Feigen and others, some of the best and brightest of the tradition-minded curators and directors are either opting out or being driven out of positions in major museums, a certain sign of these institutions' intellectual, and spiritual, ill health.

If connoisseurship is not yet dead—and it emphatically is not, as recent New York exhibits like *The Year One: Art of the Ancient World East and West* at the Metropolitan, *Rembrandt and the Venetian Influence* at the Salander O'Reilly Gallery, and *Ruskin's Italy, Ruskin's England* at the Pierpont Morgan Library continue to remind us—there is nevertheless good reason to wonder about its eventual fate. Perhaps the best indication of where we are and where we are heading is an anecdote Feigen tells about a recent dinner at Harvard's Fogg Museum. "[B]ack on hallowed ground and basking in the old academic atmosphere, I happened to use the word 'connoisseurship' in a conversation with one of the faculty. After all, there I was in its very cradle. My friend said, wryly, I thought, 'We don't use that word around here anymore.'"

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Books in Review

The Author in Full

Hooking Up
by Tom Wolfe
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 293 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Midge Decter

THE FIRST time I saw Tom Wolfe on television, many long years ago, I was astonished. Wolfe was on his way to becoming famous as a whoop-de-doo practitioner of what was then known as the "new" journalism—which meant journalism whose author had contrived to share equal billing with his subject (and which now seems to have become the only kind of journalism there is). In those days Wolfe was publishing a good deal in a hot young magazine called *New York*, an offshoot of the old *Herald Tribune*.

Since that time, *New York* has gone through a number of new owners, managements, and styles. But in the period of its first freedom and inventiveness it was focused almost exclusively on the fashions, and tribulations, of up-and-coming New Yorkers—people like its editors, in fact. It treated these people sometimes with sympathy and sometimes with high but somehow easy-to-take ridicule. Wolfe was responsible for a fair amount of the latter, having just about the most finely educated, and meanest, eye for most of the petty foibles known to man.

This perceptiveness was accompanied by a curiously unmastered literary style, all ellipses and exclamation points and typographical gesturings, as if the fingers and the mind were as yet not quite in synch. In addition to this verbal excess Wolfe was also then in the process of becoming famous for his sartorial excess, white suits worn in the manner of a riverboat gambler. His dress has since come to seem a kind of amiable peccadillo, but in those days it was taken by many to be a thumb in the journalistic eye or, to put it another way, a thumbing of the Wolfean nose.

Then one evening there he was, in full white resplendence, speaking with an interviewer on a television talk show, and as he began to answer the sorts of silly questions that are usually asked of literary people by members of the media I found myself most pleasantly surprised and also chastened for my earlier tendency to dismiss him. Tom Wolfe, the putative reckless high-flyer of American pop journalism, turned out to be a man of enormous intelligence and cultivation.

It may be remembered that the mid-60's were already promising not to be good days for either culture or politics. Some people who had eyes to see and ears to hear were beginning to sense that life in the advanced sectors of society was moving in an ever more threatening direction. And there was Tom Wolfe, darling of all who aspired to be on the *qui vive*, talking in the most perspicuous and well-honed terms about the various "liberations" bursting upon us. As he himself might have put it in those days, "Right there on the tube! A famous author!!

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Talking . . . unfashionable sense!!!" In any case, by the time the program was finished, I was about ready to stand and salute.

Little by little, it all began to come together: the fearless inquiring mind, the wicked eye, and the cooling—though never to be really cooled—prose. Wolfe began producing not pieces but essays (and from the essays, books) whose most memorable achievement was their sharp, serious, and yet truly funny—hence unforgettable—take on things. Among many examples there was "Radical Chic," an essay that skewered the great conductor Leonard Bernstein by associating his playtime leftist politics with the idea of *nostalgie de la boue*, the make-believe romantic affection of the truly well-off for the life led by their fellow creatures at the social bottom, i.e., in the mud, or *boue*. Another permanent contribution to the vocabulary of urban life was Wolfe's characterization of the pressure being wielded by certain black activists against white officialdom as "mau-mauing," a borrowing from the name of a Kenyan terrorist group that had something to do with the British retreat from Her Majesty's African colonies. (By now the history has been forgotten, but Wolfe's usage is likely to remain immortal.)

Beyond adding permanent enrichment to the American lingo, over the years Wolfe has also, with malice aforethought, fluttered more than one cultural dovecote—Left, Right, all around the town. Thus, at a moment when heroism and greatness were being desperately sought wherever Americans could find it, he insistently made light of the celebrated daring of our astronauts (*The Right Stuff*, 1979). True, he provided a certifiably thrilling substitute, namely, a group of test pilots first among whom was the dazzling Chuck Yeager; but for all their panache, Wolfe's pilots embodied only their own, not the nation's, heroism. Another example of his will to deflate cultural piety—in this case, high-cultural piety—was to be found in his jeremiads against the influence of the avant-garde in art and architecture. Both *The Painted Word* (1975) and *From Bauhaus to Our House* (1981) brought down upon Wolfe's head the charge of rank philistinism; but, indifferent to a degree that seemed—and seems—quite singular in a successful upmarket author, he did not appear to have turned a hair even at being taken to the woodshed (in Commentary) by so formidable a taker-to-the-woodshed as Hilton Kramer.

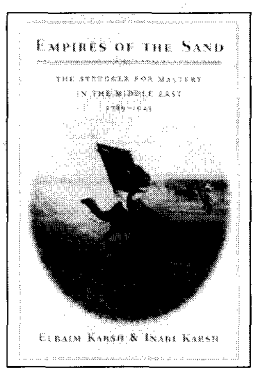
As it happens, Kramer had less warrant for turning a cold shoulder to Wolfe's ideas and attitudes than did the members of the hip literary-artistic community who had mysteriously embraced him even as he trod mercilessly on their most lovingly held attitudes. Instead, at least for a while, they lionized him, either because they were unable to see what he was really getting at, or because they were just guiltily bored by their own witless beliefs about the nature of the society they lived in, or simply because he was so vivid an entertainer. Still, here and there, evidence began to emerge that the message was at last being received.

And then came the Big Book, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987). Word had it that Wolfe had spent long and agonizing years producing this novel, which in one way or another included most of everything he had come to know about New York. *Bonfire* is a treasure-store of social

EMPIRES OF THE SAND

THE STRUGGLE FOR MASTERY IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 1789-1923

EFRAIM KARSH AND INARI KARSH



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—Daniel Pipes, COMMENTARY

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observation, especially but not exclusively about goings-on among the rich and the new rich and the would-be rich on the island of Manhattan. Its pages are full of wonderfully observed scenes and—more than that—*labels*, which in their perfect precision have gone into the language forever (like Wolfe's characterization of certain instantly recognizable types of fashionable women as "lemon tarts" or "social x-rays"). But while a masterpiece of something, *Bonfire* in the end—perhaps to the pleasure of Wolfe's less than generous critics—fails to be a masterpiece of a *novel*.

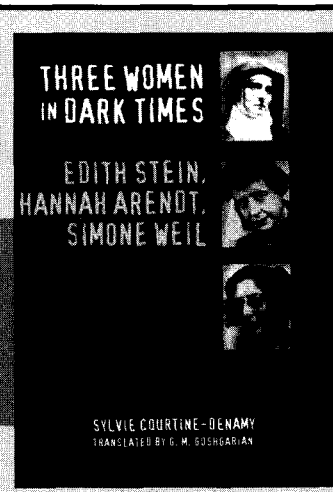
In another of his essays, Wolfe had announced to his literary contemporaries that it remained the responsibility of the novelist to seek out, study the details of, and retell the truths—or, if you will, the truth—about social reality. Taking his contemporaries to task for having abdicated the novelist's duty of bringing alive the world around him, he daringly declared that his own models were (among others) writers like Theodore Dreiser and Emile Zola, both of whom had by and large come to be dismissed by literary modernists.

But Zola and Dreiser, social novelists par excellence, were also more innocent of heart than Wolfe. No matter what sorrows they inflicted on the protagonists of their books, no matter how unending the bleakness of the world they undertook to bring alive, in the end they never failed to bestow on their characters at least some measure of authorial love and redemption. In *Bonfire*, brilliant portrait though it be, no one merits either the author's or the reader's love, and no one is redeemed. When the entertainment pales, a reader is left only with the bleakness.

The true fulfillment of Wolfe's ambition would have to wait for *A Man in Full* (1998). The hero of this novel, a highly successful builder in Atlanta, Georgia, who as the novel opens has fatally overreached and is on his way down to darkest defeat, is a large and powerful and at the same time totally unreflective man, caught in the toils of forces he is too limited to take proper measure of. But he has been given the capacity, by Wolfe, to make the reader truly care about what happens to him, and the same is true of a number of the minor characters who swim around him. Like *Bonfire*, *A Man in Full* abounds in precisely rendered social detail; but in this case, and really for the first time, the detail is there to serve the story and not the other way around. Although Wolfe ties up the book's loose ends far too abruptly and neatly with a merely handy contrivance, as a novelist he had finally broken through from a very high order of shrewdness to a deep and truly affecting intelligence.

ALL OF which lends a certain extraneous interest to *Hooking Up*, a hodgepodge of articles and essays written on various topics with varying degrees of seriousness and aplomb and put together with the air of having been cleared off Wolfe's desk to make room for his next large and ambitious work. There is, for instance, an amusing novella clearly written by the erstwhile much-too-clever Tom Wolfe. And there is a piece on the old *New Yorker* magazine and its fabled editor, William Shawn, which, when it was first published many years ago, caused a huge stir of protest from a variety of eminences. (A number of reviewers of *Hooking Up* have singled out this piece as having given them particular pleasure, perhaps *because* it is so clearly a work of the old

THREE WOMEN IN DARK TIMES
EDITH STEIN, HANNAH ARENDT, SIMONE WEIL
SYLVIE COURTINE-DENAMY
Translated by G. M. Goshgarian



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Wolfe, full of telling bits of ridicule, but in fact it does nothing to account for the great power exercised within the literary community by the *New Yorker* of that era or by its mysteriously unlikely editor.)

Hooking Up also includes a most interesting celebratory account of the two men who between them were responsible for producing the silicon chip and hence for the creation of Silicon Valley. Then, in a couple of fascinating essays taking off from the new fields of sociobiology and neuroscience, Wolfe tangles bravely with the question of the nature of man. There is also a kind of editorial about those "rococo Marxists," as he dubs them, who have refused to recognize that America is the world's greatest power, as well as an understandable but nevertheless unfortunate effort, called "My Three Stooges," to counterattack criticisms of his work that have been leveled by Norman Mailer, John Updike, and John Irving.

All of this is at the very least high entertainment, and some of it succeeds in being something more than that. (Probably the most stirring essay in the book is a portrait of the late sculptor Frederick Hart, scorned by the art-world cognoscenti for having devoted himself to the grandeur of the human body.) But by far the most intriguing item—to me, at least—is the title essay, a previously unpublished discourse on the social and sexual styles of today's young and the kind of future that life holds in store for them.

Wolfe describes these girls and boys and young men and women with the kind of slashing precision we have learned to take for granted from him. But there is something new in his tone—some quality of urgency, perhaps even of pain—that is especially arresting. The material under scrutiny somehow seems to have cut much closer to the bone, and the title he has given to this piece, and to the book, has an especially fearful ring to it. For "hooking up" is the term of choice among the young to characterize their sexual behavior with each other, as in, "I met this guy last night, and we hooked up for a while." Wolfe's perfect rendering of the thoughts and attitudes that have thus contrived to render sex, in the late Allan Bloom's phrase, "no big deal," makes one's hair stand on end. A mere observer, I think, no matter how perceptive, could not produce such an effect; it takes a truly internalized recognition—one that in the end, out of a sheer feeling of comradeship, made me laugh out loud. Oho, said I, paraphrasing King Lear, hast thou a daughter, too?

There is, then, much reason to look forward with eagerness to Tom Wolfe's next major book. For now he has lovingly gotten both feet sunk deeply and inextricably into the muck.

Toward Prosperity

The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else

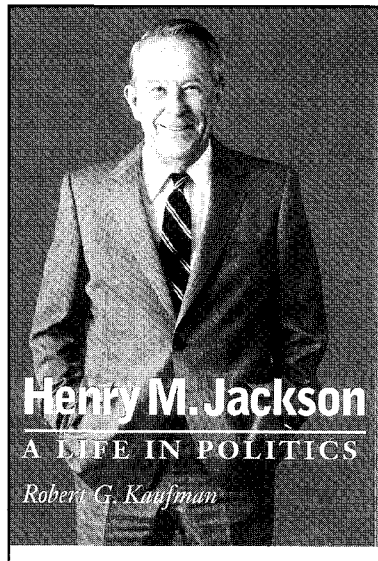
by Hernando de Soto

Basic. 276 pp. $27.50

Reviewed by
Richard Pipes

Hernando de Soto, a sixty-year-old Peruvian economist, heads the Institute of Liberty and Democracy in Lima. He came to widespread public notice in 1989

Richard Pipes *is Baird research professor of history at Harvard and the author of, among many other works,* Property and Freedom.



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with the translation into English of his book on the actual workings of the Peruvian economic system, *The Other Path*.* In 1990, he became an adviser to Alberto Fujimori, then newly elected as president of Peru.

De Soto is a man of one idea, but it is a powerful and persuasive idea. In contrast to those who argue that third-world poverty is traceable to the inequities of the capitalist system, which can be remedied only by a redistribution of wealth, he contends that its real cause is an insufficiently developed capitalism. Studying the economy of Peru for *The Other Path*, he and his associates discovered that nearly 40 percent of the country's gross domestic product was the creation of "informal" assets and enterprises that remained outside the legal system because the entrepreneurs who held them lacked titles of ownership. Without such titles, they could not obtain mortgages or other forms of credit, or buy insurance, or raise capital by going public. As a consequence, a great deal of capital was "dead," i.e., unproductive. The state suffered financially as well, because these resources were outside the reach of the tax collector.

On de Soto's advice, Fujimori set up special registry offices to provide easy procedures for transforming informal into legal property. In time, some 276,000 small enterprises availed themselves of this opportunity. The government gained an additional $1.2 billion in taxes.

In the present volume, de Soto applies the same methodology to several other third-world countries, including the Philippines, Egypt, Haiti, and Mexico. Everywhere he finds the same picture: the process of legalizing possession is so expensive and cumbersome as to discourage even the most determined:

> In Egypt, the person who wants to acquire and legally register a lot on state-owned desert land must wend his way through at least 77 bureaucratic procedures at 31 public and private agencies. . . . This can take anywhere from five to fourteen years. To build a legal dwelling on former agricultural land would require six to eleven years of bureaucratic wrangling, maybe longer. This explains why 4.7 million Egyptians have chosen to build their dwellings illegally.

* For a discussion of this book, see "The Only Hope for Latin America" by Mark Falcoff (COMMENTARY, April 1989).

THEO TSCHUY
Dangerous Diplomacy
Foreword by Simon Wiesenthal
The Story of Carl Lutz, Rescuer of 62,000 Hungarian Jews

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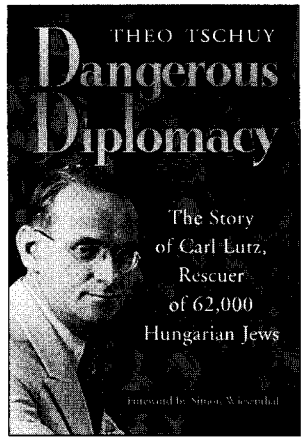

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In Haiti, the very poorest of the Caribbean islands, the situation is similar. There,

> untitled rural and urban real-estate holdings are together worth some $5.2 billion. To put that sum in context, it is four times the total of all the assets of all the legally operating companies in Haiti, nine times the value of all assets owned by the government, and 158 times the total of all foreign direct investment in Haiti's recorded history to 1995.

In all, de Soto estimates that "the total value of the real estate held but not owned by the poor of the third world and former Communist nations is at least $9.3 trillion." Releasing this "dead capital," he is certain, would revolutionize the economies of the third world. But the decision to do so is a political one. Governments have to display the will to simplify radically the procedures for transforming possession (a term which, for some reason, he eschews in favor of "extralegal" or "informal" assets) into true property.

In support of his thesis, de Soto asserts that until approximately two centuries ago, assets in Europe and the United States were just as insecure as they are in the third world today. Economic progress in the West surged once governments realized that it made no sense for so large a proportion of the people to live and work outside "official law." There is no reason, he concludes, why the same thing cannot happen elsewhere.

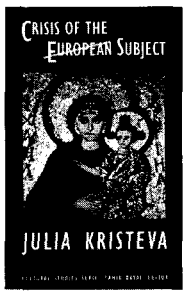
I BUY de Soto's argument, although with qualifications.

First, his statistics. In countries hardly known for the accuracy of their information-gathering services, it is difficult to believe one can arrive at the precise worth of something as shadowy as the informal economy. Do we really know that the total value of informally held assets in Port-au-Prince is $1.8 billion? Or that in the Middle East and North Africa, such assets amount to $0.74 trillion? These numbers, surely little more than rough guesses, cast doubt on de Soto's figure of $9.3 trillion for the total value of real estate held but not legally owned in the third world and former Communist countries. It would have been enough—and more convincing—to speak of this "dead capital" as running in the trillions of dollars.

Next, history. Legal property in land existed in Europe much earlier than de Soto assumes. There are even indications that it existed in ancient Israel and Athens—that is, in the first millennium B.C.E. Rome had a highly developed legal system built around private property in land. Recent research has shown that as early as the 13th century, land in England was bought and sold in a manner not much different from today's. In most European countries, moreover, landed possessions were taxed from early modern times.

In brief, property in the West was recognized long before "a couple of hundred years ago," as de Soto suggests. Indeed, it is this ownership that led throughout the continent to the rise of parliaments, whose primary function it was to grant tax money to the king. This fact also indicates that culture, including political culture, plays a much larger role than de Soto allows in the evolution both of property rights and of capitalism.

Finally, de Soto may underestimate the difficulties of running enterprises even in today's capitalist West. In the *Wall Street Journal Europe*, a British businesswoman named Danielle Downing recently spelled out the obstacles she encountered with various regulatory agencies while managing her Bagel Street Company with its 50 employees. British regulations applicable to small hotels and restaurants come to 1,500 pages. To open a



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bagel bar, one needs at least ten permits, and the cost of securing them amounted in her case to £2,000. Dealing with the various agencies sometimes required her to spend—to waste—40 hours a week of her time.

THESE CAVEATS qualify but do not invalidate de Soto's general thesis: that there exists in much of the world today a kind of "capitalist apartheid" that prevents "the majority from entering the formal capitalist system." When it is abolished, or at least significantly reduced, the economic benefits are likely to be stunning. As he convincingly demonstrates, the road to worldwide prosperity requires not restraining capitalism but making it universal.

The Fuehrer Myth

Hitler:
1889-1936: Hubris
by Ian Kershaw
Norton. 845 pp. $35.00

Hitler:
1936-1945: Nemesis
by Ian Kershaw
Norton. 1,115 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
Jacob Heilbrunn

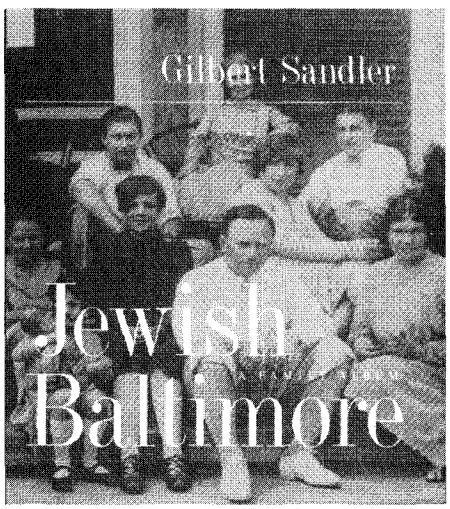
THE IDEA of the great man in history has gone distinctly out of fashion. Ever since "social history" came into vogue, academics have had little but disdain for the idea that unique personal qualities enabled Frederick the Great to turn Prussia into a leading power or Napoleon to unify the European continent. In university history departments these days, high politics is viewed as a frivolous distraction at best, and, at worst, as patriarchal. What count are the behavioral patterns of large social forces and interests: economic, bureaucratic, ethnic, sexual, and so forth.

The historiography of Nazi Germany has been no exception to this trend. Dismissive of the notion that a single man could have led an entire nation into the abyss, "functionalist" historians like Hans Mommsen have minutely traced the bureaucratic machinations that account, in this view, for the progressive radicalization of the Third Reich and the mass murder of Europe's Jews. Hitler and his camarilla play walk-on parts. Given the dominance of this approach, it is hardly an accident that despite the flood of literature about Nazi Germany, so few scholarly biographies of Hitler have appeared, all of them decades ago.

Ian Kershaw's massive two-volume work is thus something of an event. Kershaw, a historian at the University of Sheffield in England, has been an adherent of the social-history camp. In his previous books, he focused not on Hitler but on Hitler's image and the way it was received by ordinary Germans. But, as he confesses here, he came to feel uneasy about effacing Hitler from the history of the Third Reich.

In writing a biography, Kershaw now seeks to redress the balance. But he has done so by bringing the tools of social history to bear on the career of the great dictator himself. What emerges, therefore, is a Hitler who is less the product of his own efforts than a creation of German society. By proceeding in this fashion, Kershaw hopes to demolish what he calls the "Fuehrer myth"—the legend, promoted assiduously by

JACOB HEILBRUNN *is a writer living in Washington, D.C.*



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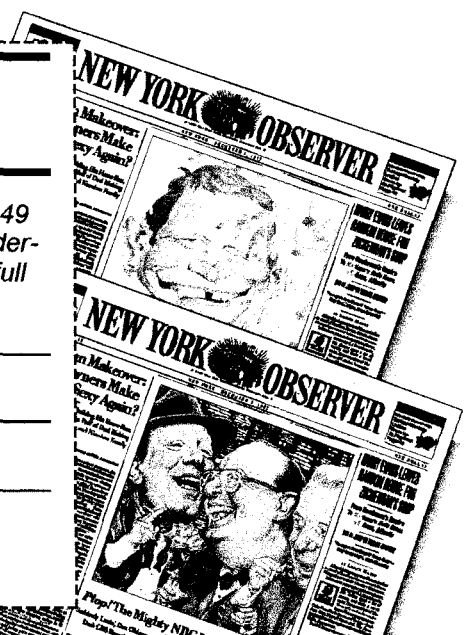

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Hitler himself, that he waged a lonely struggle against his enemies and prevailed only through sheer force of will. Whether Kershaw succeeds is another question.

IN HIS first volume, which came out in this country last year, Kershaw carefully traces Hitler's years as a drifter in the anti-Semitic cauldron of Vienna. He then examines his experiences in the German army in World War I, his career as a beer-hall agitator in Munich, and his intrigues with the national-conservative politicians who installed him in power in 1933. The volume ends with Hitler's first great foreign-policy success—the occupation of the Rhineland—when he began to believe in his own infallibility.

It was this belief that, as Kershaw's second volume relates, led Hitler to embark on ever-more reckless military adventures and finally to plunge into a dreaded two-front war against the West and the Soviet Union simultaneously. In tracing the course of that war, Kershaw also devotes considerable attention to the unfolding of the Final Solution, a subject scanted or ignored by previous Hitler biographers. He ends with Hitler, utterly oblivious to his place as the greatest criminal in history, ranting to his associates in his bunker about the Jewish peril before shooting himself.

In constructing this portrait, Kershaw has performed prodigies of research. He appears to have left no archive unvisited, and to have read everything by and about Hitler, including Joseph Goebbels's newly discovered diaries. The result is certainly the most comprehensive biography to date. It is also, in tone, the most detached, not to say clinical. In an implicit repudiation of the kind of indignation summoned up by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen in *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, Kershaw explains that his task is "not to engage in moral disquisitions on the problem of evil in a historical personality, but to try to explain the grip Hitler had on the society which eventually paid such a high price for its support."

There is no disputing that Kershaw does a convincing job of dismantling some of the myths that have accreted to the Nazi leader over the years. One such myth is the notion, propagated by Hitler himself in *Mein Kampf*, that he was already a convinced anti-Semite during his years in Vienna before World War I. In fact, Kershaw shows, although he was certainly influenced by anti-Semites like Karl Lueger, the mayor of Vienna, he had not yet formed the coherent view of a Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy that was later to dominate his thoughts. The "key ideological breakthrough," in Kershaw's judgment, came only in 1919, in the anti-Bolshevik "instruction courses" Hitler attended at Munich University at the behest of the army. Soon enough, he was himself indoctrinating troops against Bolshevism in lectures of such frenzied anti-Semitism that he was asked by his superiors to tone them down.

Kershaw also shows, contrary to another myth, that Hitler did not singlehandedly build a mass movement from scratch in Bavaria. That region's farrago of nationalist groups actually provided an ideal environment for his movement, as well as a variety of sponsors to supply him with respectability and, even more important, cash. Not only was he dependent on others, his own efforts were often fumbling. "During this period, Hitler was seldom, if ever, master of his own destiny," Kershaw writes. "The key decisions—to take over the party leadership in 1921, to engage in the putsch adventure in 1923—were not carefully conceived actions, but desperate forward moves to save face."

Kershaw also argues that, contrary to his own carefully crafted legend, Hitler did not come to power in 1933 through a "triumph of the will." Even though a sizable part of the German populace proved responsive to Hitler's bellicose rhetoric, this by itself would not have sufficed. He still needed to be "levered" into office by members of the German elite like the feckless former chancellor Franz von Papen, who believed that the responsibility of exercising power would "tame" the Austrian corporal. In Kershaw's view, without supporters and quasi-supporters in high places, "Hitler would never—even as head of a huge movement, and with over 13 million supporters in the country—have been able to come to power." Hitler's dictatorship, concludes Kershaw, "was made as much by others as by himself."

THIS LAST point forms, indeed, the leitmotif of Kershaw's second volume. Aiming to reduce the Hitler myth to rubble, Kershaw contends not only that Hitler constantly vacillated and tried to put off decisions during the war years, but that it was his subordinates who formulated and advanced many of the regime's policies. Indeed, Kershaw adduces instances in which these subordinates, lacking clear guidance from Hitler, embarked upon radical initiatives in anticipation of what they deemed to be his wishes. The Nazi phrase for this was "working toward the Fuehrer."

But this line of argument can be pushed too far. To take the single most important issue, Kershaw seems to suggest that in pursuing the extermination of European Jewry, Hitler was irresolute and had to be urged on by Heinrich Himmler, Reinhard Heydrich, and Goebbels. Around the middle of September 1941, Kershaw writes, "Hitler had *bowed* to the pressure to deport the German and Czech Jews to the East" (emphasis added). And "within a few days of the decision to deport the Reich Jews," he continues a bit later, "Goebbels was back at Fuehrer headquarters, seizing the opportunity to press once more for the removal of the Jews from Berlin."

Is that, however, the way things happened? Obviously, in carrying

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Terror in Israel
Can the peace process be saved?

The world is once again confronted with the frenzy of Arab-Muslim terror. It has found its crudest and most disturbing expression in the upheavals in Israel, the well-orchestrated "second intifada," and in the suicide attack on the USS COLE, in which seventeen American sailors died and scores were gravely wounded.

What are the facts?

A history of terror. Since that famous handshake on the White House lawn seven years ago, there have been many suicide bombings and other murderous attacks on Jews in Israel. Not content with that, the Muslim-Arab murderers have perpetrated outrages against Israel and against other western targets all over the world. For instance, they bombed and totally destroyed two U.S. embassies in Africa, with grievous loss of life. They bombed the World Trade Center in New York and were barely prevented from bombing the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels, the U.N. building and the subway. Arab-Muslim terrorists car bombed and totally destroyed the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires, the Israeli Embassy in the same city, and bombed and destroyed the Israeli Embassy in London. Hundreds of people were killed. There can be no question that Arab-Muslim terrorists were behind the PanAm flight 103 plane explosion (whether they were Libyans or Palestinians, does it make any difference?), the blowing up of the U.S. Air Force barracks in Saudi Arabia, in which nineteen Air Force personnel died, and in literally hundreds of other acts of terror. The Arab-Muslim states were in all cases conspicuous by their unhelpfulness, stiff-arming all efforts by Israel and the United States to find and punish the culprits. Without exception, all these terror acts, including the murder of two U.S. diplomats in Khartoum (Sudan), were explicitly authored by Yassir Arafat. That is a man, who until too long ago, was classified by the U.S. State Department as an international terrorist and was precluded from entering the United States. Now, thanks mostly to deluded Israeli leftists and "peace activists", he has emerged as a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize (surely one of recent history's most outrageous jokes) and as a "statesman" who is received with honor in the capitals and chancelleries of the world.

Any pretext suffices. The world is comfortable in believing that the rage of the Arab-Muslims is directed toward Israel and that peace would reign in the Middle East and the world if, by some unholy miracle, Israel would agree to all Arab requests or, better yet, disappear altogether. That calamity would cause great rejoicing in the Arab-Muslim world. But it would really only be the beginning. The real enemy, the "great Satan" is the Western world, and especially the United States. Everything we believe in -- democracy, justice, human rights, freedom of religion (especially!) is anathema to the Arab-Muslims. But, of course, the destruction of the State of Israel is the primary and immediate goal, not just of the Palestinian Arabs, but of all Arab Muslims and of the non-Arab Iranians. Instead of following the agreements of the Oslo Accord, Arafat goads his followers with blood-curdling speeches into ever-increasing violence, urging them to "liberate Palestine" (that means all of Israel) and Jerusalem by jihad (holy war), "by blood and by fire," and to become martyrs for this sacred cause.

> "For peace to be possible, the Arab world has to develop a totally different mind set. It has to fully accept to live side-by-side with the Jewish State of Israel."

Any pretext to violence suffices. Now it is a visit to the Temple Mount by Ariel Sharon. Before that it was the opening of an archaeological tunnel that offended the sensitivities of the Palestinian Arabs. Then it was the construction of residences by Israeli Jews on land that they owned. And often no pretext at all is needed. Terror is committed out of sheer hatred for the Jews and the desire to kill as many of them as possible. And that is the nub of the problem. Only the most naive can believe that the Palestinian Arabs (or the rest of the Arab-Muslim world) can be placated by the Israelis bringing "sacrifices for peace." The Arabs will not be satisfied with any piece of land. Even if the Israeli Jews were prepared to hand over the entire land of Israel to the Arabs and only retain, perhaps, the enclave of Tel Aviv, it would not suffice. The elimination of any Jewish vestige is the inalterable goal. The presence of Jews in the Middle East is an unacceptable thorn in the side of the Arabs -- an insult that must be avenged and eliminated. But, of course, no peace can come about until that attitude and that mindset change.

What does this mean for the so-called "peace process"? The Israelis, especially under the leadership of Ehud Barak, have fulfilled every obligation undertaken in the Oslo Accord -- including many additional concessions that were not required of them. Arafat and his people have fulfilled none of their obligations, including the most basic one, namely to abstain from violence and terror. They have not amended their infamous charter, which calls for the destruction of the State of Israel. They have created an army of over 40,000 men, with missiles, artillery and anti-tank weapons, totally prohibited under the Oslo Accord. Can the "peace process" be saved? At this point, and in view of recent happenings, the regretful answer has to be that it doesn't seem likely for any foreseeable future. Since all Arab children are imbued from first grade with hatred for the Jews and with the desire to become martyrs for their cause, that would seem to be a long way off.

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out a vast and complex project like the Final Solution, Hitler had to rely on subordinates. Nor, as is well known, did he leave a trail of written commands for later historians to point to. But the fact remains that it was his deep and longstanding hatred of the Jews, and his gift for telegraphing that hatred to his subordinates and the German masses alike, that made him the central *agent* of the Holocaust and not simply (as Kershaw acknowledges at one point) its "chief inspiration."* In carrying out the most terrible crime in history, Hitler was hardly "bowing" to pressure from below.

This brings us to the deeper problem of Kershaw's approach. In conceiving of Hitler's power as "a social product"—a product that was itself the "creation of social expectations and motivations vested in Hitler by his followers"—Kershaw not only fails to bring Hitler's personality to life but never satisfactorily comes to grips with his fundamental motivations and demonic qualities. Indeed, Kershaw regards talk of Hitler's uniquely evil character as mostly humbug, an (unintended) artifact of Nazi propaganda that portrayed the Fuehrer as superhuman.

Unfortunately, the idea of power as a "social product" is itself distressingly vague—nothing more than opaque speculation about the mindset of the German people that fails to explain what most needs to be explained. Again and again in the course of his career, Hitler reached key decisions that brought him success *against* opposition both from within and from without his ranks. In 1933, he insisted on settling for nothing less than the chancellorship even when he had already been offered other cabinet positions. In the early years of his dictatorship, he overrode the objections of his generals in securing a string of diplomatic and military triumphs. And during the course of World War II it was he, most fatefully, who translated radical anti-Semitism into genocidal deeds. To relegate Hitler to a creature of the hopes placed in him by the German people is wildly to underestimate both him and the evil that he wrought (or that, in Kershaw's cautious formulation, is "associated with the name of one man"). Though he had his helpers, Hitler did lead an entire nation into the abyss. In that sense, if in that sense alone, he can be called a great man.

* This acknowledgment is itself something of a concession for Kershaw. In his book, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (1985), reissued in a new edition earlier this year, Kershaw wrote that "Hitler himself took relatively little part in the overt formulation of . . . [the Nazi party's anti-Semitic] policy, either during the 1930's or even the genesis of the 'Final Solution' itself."

On the Wing

The Transformation of American Air Power
by Benjamin S. Lambeth
Cornell. 337 pp. $29.95

Reviewed by
Andrew J. Bacevich

In the long history of warfare, the air weapon is a latecomer, arriving on the battlefield less than a century ago. Virtually from the outset, advocates of this weapon were persuaded of its revolutionary potential, and vigorously repudiated efforts to consign airplanes to the ancillary role of supporting the forces fighting on land or sea. In the aftermath of World War I, pioneers of military aviation were already spinning theories that cast air power as a war-winner.

Such claims, in their own time, generated more controversy than consensus in military circles. And the

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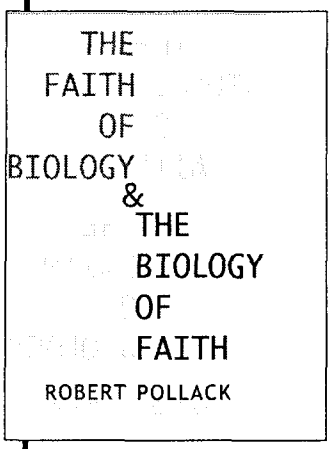
Faith & **Science.**



Are there parallels between the moment of insight in science and the emergence of the "unknowable" in religious faith? Where does scientific insight come from? An award-winning biologist argues that an alliance between faith and science is not necessarily an argument in favor of irrationality: the two can inform each other's vision of the world.

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debate only intensified through subsequent conflicts in which air power played an ever more visible role—World War II, Korea, and especially Vietnam. But with the Persian Gulf war in the early 1990's, events seemed finally to bear out the devotees. The visually spectacular and astonishingly successful bombing campaign that opened Operation Desert Storm made the defeat of the Iraqi army and the liberation of Kuwait a cakewalk. Military aviation, at long last, seemed to have come into its own.

In *The Transformation of American Air Power*, Benjamin S. Lambeth, a senior staff member at RAND, the government-funded think tank, recounts this "final coming of age." Over the past two decades, he writes, "American air power has experienced a nonlinear growth in its ability to contribute to the outcome of joint operations at the higher end of the conflict spectrum." Translated from RAND-speak, this appears to mean that air power has conclusively demonstrated its ability to win conventional wars, although in fact Lambeth stops just short of making quite so sweeping a claim. Instead, he argues that a well-designed air campaign can "neutralize enemy armies and surface navies anywhere," leaving to earthbound forces the crucial but now-secondary role of occupying contested territory, disarming a demoralized foe, and carrying out the terms of surrender.

IN TRACING the maturation of the air weapon, Lambeth properly begins with the debacle of Vietnam and the military renaissance launched in its wake. Chief among the inanities that undermined the U.S. bombing campaign in Vietnam, as he tells it, was the strategy of gradual escalation intended not to destroy the enemy but to send "signals." Others have made this point as well, but to it Lambeth adds another: namely, that American airmen themselves, having spent the 1950's preparing to wage all-out nuclear war against the Soviet Union, were ill-prepared for Vietnam. Even had civilian leaders allowed the generals to conduct the air war according to their own lights, defective operational concepts and unsuitable hardware would have posed all but insurmountable obstacles to success.

To their credit, as Lambeth shows, the generals learned from their failures in Vietnam. In the aftermath, each service (for in the American system each of the four military branches has its own air force) embarked upon major reforms. Although the top priority reverted to countering the Soviet threat in Europe, the favored scenario changed from a dependence on nuclear weapons and strategic retaliation to a reliance on conventional weapons. Given, however, the Warsaw Pact's enormous edge in mechanized formations, a successful conventional defense required radical improvements in air capabilities. And indeed the late 1970's and 1980's saw a host of innovations, including not only new technologies such as precision-guided munitions and stealthy aircraft that would be invisible to enemy radar but also new concepts for fighting air wars and training regimes of unprecedented realism and rigor.

The Warsaw Pact assault on Western Europe never materialized, of course, but then in August 1990 came Saddam Hussein's reckless invasion of Kuwait. The ensuing campaign brought to bear the full panoply of new air weapons and techniques. What made the difference was not the so-called "strategic bombing" of the Iraqi military and industrial base—that effort, according to Lambeth, yielded little—but relentless attacks on the Iraqi army in the field. These led directly to "the individual soldier's loss of will and resolve to fight."

In the years after Desert Storm, as Lambeth shows, the United States has come to rely ever more heavily on air power as its preferred military instrument, a trend that culminated in the U.S.-led war against Serbia in 1999. At least as the Clinton administration portrayed it, this casualty-free war was a triumphal feat of arms, and the fullest expression yet of what has emerged as the new American way of waging battle from the skies.

LAMBETH TELLS his story in close and engaging detail. But whether he is right in contending that a "new day" of air dominance has dawned is not so clear.

His case would be more persuasive if military history had come to an end in 1991, amid the detritus of the battered Iraqi army and widespread amazement at the effectiveness of high-tech arms. But viewed from the perspective of a decade later, Operation Desert Storm turns out to have been less a template for the future than an anomaly. What the passage of time has allowed us to see is that the Persian Gulf war was fought in conditions uniquely favorable to the United States and its allies, while the Iraqi military, their adversary, proved to be remarkably inept. Desert Storm was, in the end, not a harbinger of something new, but an antique: the last manifestation of a now-outmoded style of industrial-age, mechanized warfare.

The more recent and, arguably, more instructive war for Kosovo was something else entirely. In this conflict, the U.S. and its European allies triumphed, but in doing so confronted large new questions about air power's actual efficacy and continuing limitations. As Lambeth himself makes clear, NATO ultimately prevailed in Kosovo not through the "cleverness" of its aerial assault on the army in the field (as had been the case in Iraq), but by "bring[ing] the war home to the Serbian population" with attacks on civilian targets—inflicting greater damage than the "successive Nazi and Allied bombing of Yugoslavia in World War II." Moreover, as he goes on to suggest, it was not bombing but the likely prospect of NATO intervention on the ground that finally caused Slobodan Milosevic to give way. When he did so, his army withdrew from Kosovo intact, "spirited and defiant

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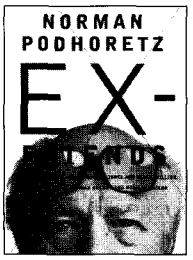

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rather than beaten." Finally, as an instrument for stopping Yugoslav ground forces from engaging in ethnic cleansing—the very object for which the U.S. went to war—air power failed abjectly.

In short, though the American-orchestrated air campaign against Yugoslavia ended in a success of sorts, it both differed from Desert Storm in its approach and resulted in an ambiguous outcome. To understand why requires the consideration of factors other than the strictly military.

In the years leading up to Desert Storm, there unquestionably was a transformation in the nature of war, a transformation that centered on technology and technique; but in the years since, that transformation has been matched, and eclipsed, by another of greater importance. Even as America's role and responsibilities as the world's sole remaining superpower have expanded, so have the ranks of those who reject American values and who use violence to contest American preeminence. In doing so, those opponents rely on means of their own choosing. These means have not tended to include the massing of armored divisions vulnerable to air attack. More often, they resemble the urban guerrilla attacks U.S. forces encountered in Somalia, or this past autumn's suicide bombing in Yemen of the *USS Cole*.

At its core, the change I am describing is political in nature, and in war, politics trumps all else. Lambeth, despite his enthusiasm for air power's "nonlinear growth," seems to be aware of this. In a brief passage notable for both its modesty and its clarity, he observes that "air power is, at bottom, a blunt instrument designed to break things and kill people in pursuit of clear and militarily achievable objectives on the ground." True enough. When military theorists venture beyond such axioms and begin touting air power as an all-purpose elixir—low cost, risk-free, with results guaranteed—it is time to be wary.

Attachment and Loss

The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25 Year Landmark Study
by Judith S. Wallerstein, Julia M. Lewis, and Sandra Blakeslee
Hyperion. 347 pp. $24.95

The Case for Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially
by Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher
Doubleday. 260 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Claudia Winkler

NOT THE least noteworthy aspect of these two complementary books is the background of their principal authors. Neither Judith S. Wallerstein, a senior lecturer emeritus at the school of social welfare at the University of California at Berkeley, nor Linda J. Waite, a professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, can be written off as a conservative. Indeed, each has emphasized the surprise she felt at the—conservative—findings to which she was led by her research.

Wallerstein does so in the very title of her book, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*. Why unexpected? As she explains in the preface, she had begun a study of 131 children of divorce in 1971, and had already reinterviewed these children eighteen months, five years, and a decade after their parents' breakup. Assuming that there was nothing new to add, she had not intended to continue beyond that point. But an encounter in 1994 with one of the participants in the original study, by this time a woman of thirty-four, spurred Wallerstein to reconsider. She tracked down 93 of her original subjects and, to help illuminate their experiences at the 25-year mark, also recruited and interviewed a "comparison group" of 44 adults similar in age and socioeconomic status but whose parents had not divorced.

Wallerstein and her co-authors, the psychologist Julia M. Lewis and the journalist Sandra Blakeslee, bring their subjects to life in an array of vivid, individualized stories. The first section of the book juxtaposes a child forced by divorce to take on adult responsibilities with another whose unhappy parents remained committed to their marriage. The second contrasts two children who had witnessed chronic violence at home, one whose parents divorced, the other whose parents stayed together. Subsequent sections examine the cases of a "parentless" child who lost her father to divorce and her mother to an exhausting schedule of study and work; a child born with a heart condition, whose special needs went unmet as his parents became caught up in their new families; and, finally, a divorce in which devoted parents and a gracious child, helped along by plenty of money and career success, behaved with consideration through the years.

Interwoven throughout these beautifully rendered personal histories are the authors' broader findings and reflections. One recurrent theme is how radically different a divorce looks from the vantage point of children as opposed to adults. For most of the children in the study, even those who had witnessed frequent fighting, their parents' decision to separate came as a bolt from the blue. For their part, the parents often operated by what the authors call the "trickle-down theory of family happiness." Believing that everyone would be better off once the adults were happier, they never acknowledged their children's dismay, thereby increasing the latter's anguish and sense of isolation.

CLAUDIA WINKLER, *a new contributor, is a managing editor of the* Weekly Standard.

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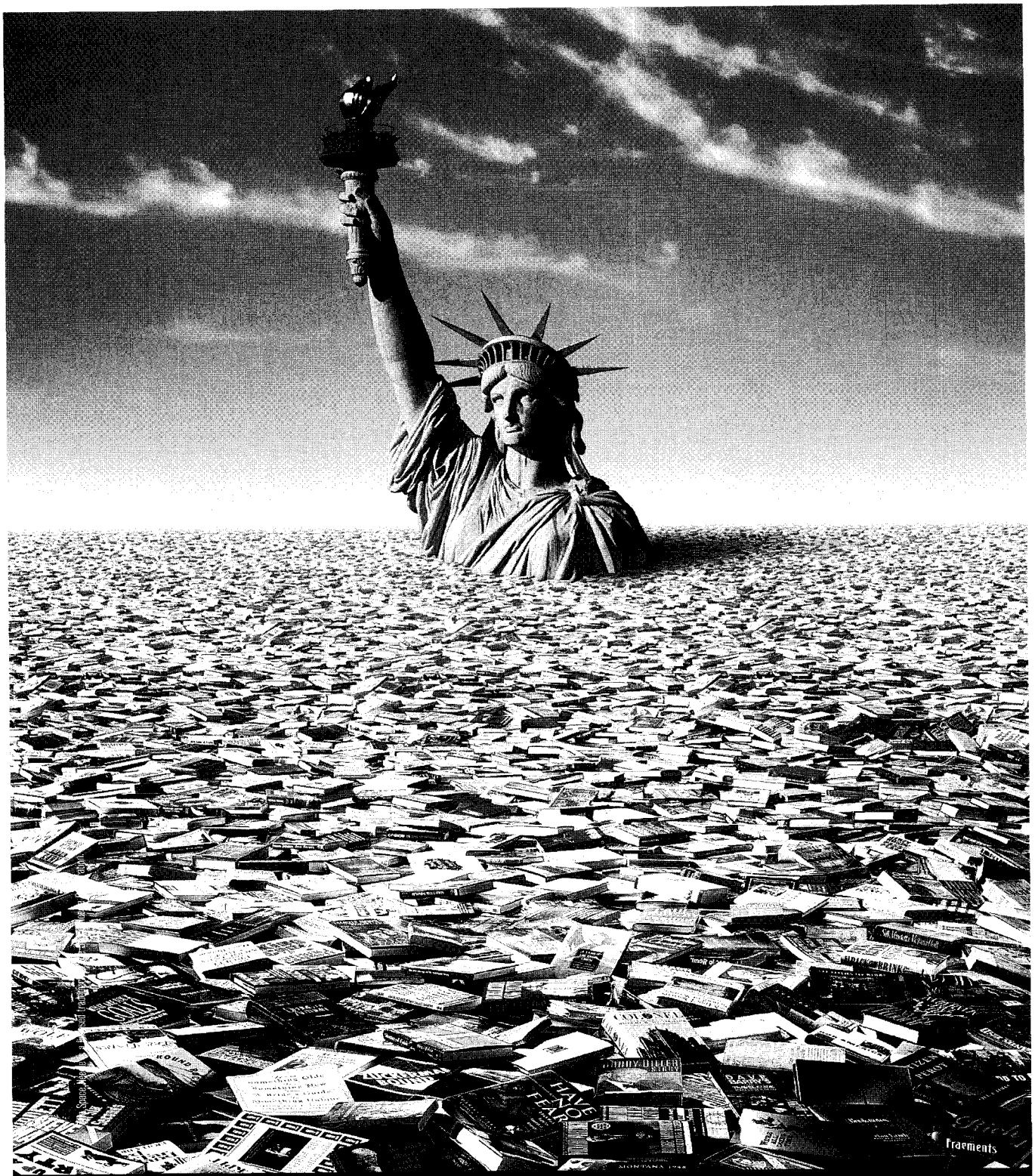

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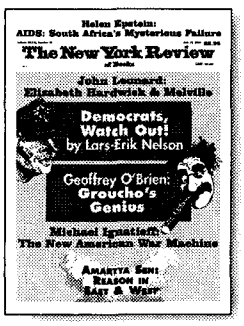
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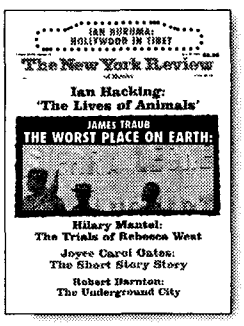
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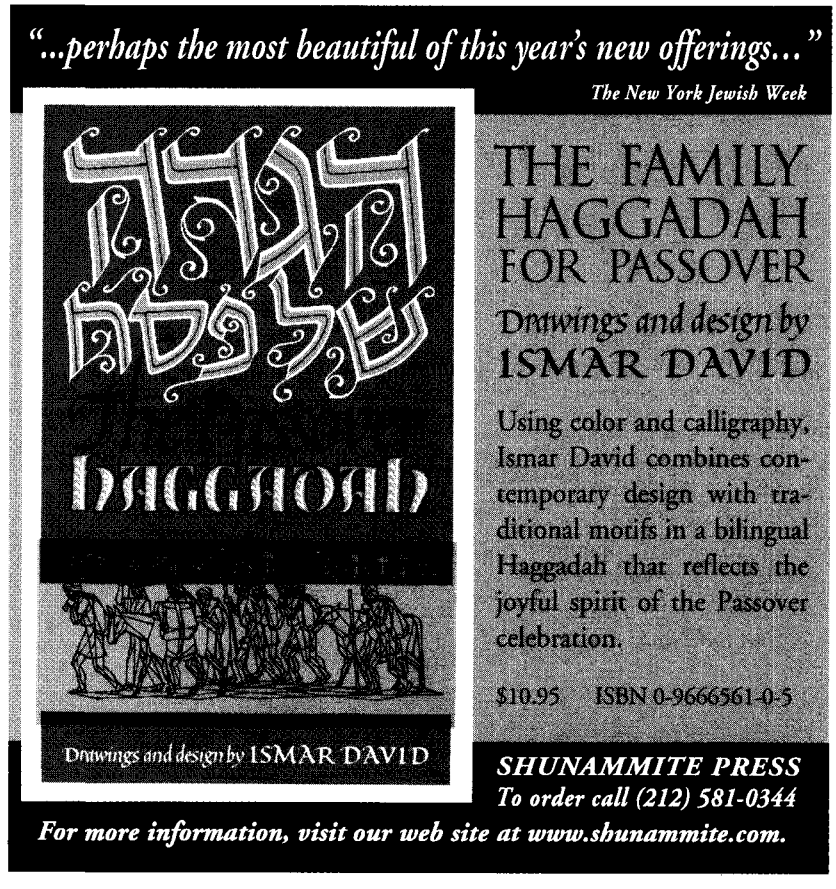
Much of this confirms what Wallerstein herself had concluded in her previous books on this group. Defying progressive reformers, she had suggested that divorce was not just an upsetting event from which children quickly recover as their parents remarry and their lives regain stability. To the contrary, the worlds of many of her young subjects were permanently altered for the worse. Though Wallerstein had taken care to choose children who were flourishing at home and school at the time of their parents' divorce, years later she found many of them "caught in intense inner conflict."

What, then, to repeat, is the "unexpected" news? It is that divorce, as Wallerstein puts it, is "a life-transforming experience" whose psychological effects are *cumulative*, reaching a peak in young adulthood in the form of acute anxiety surrounding romantic attachment and the establishment of a family. Wallerstein's subjects, though often displaying a high degree of self-reliance in their careers, have tended to make their way toward domestic commitments far more slowly, circuitously, and painfully than the offspring of intact families. And fewer have even made it to that point. After 25 years, and ranging in age from twenty-eight to forty-three, 40 percent of her children of divorce have never married—as compared with 16 percent in a national sampling of counterparts from intact families—and two-thirds have decided never to have children.

Wallerstein attributes these effects to various aspects of life in post-divorce families. As both parents reenter the dating arena, she observes, children are liable to undergo repeated experiences of attachment and loss, thus reinforcing their sense of the fragility of relationships. And because for second marriages the divorce rate is much higher than for first, many children—indeed, two-thirds of Wallerstein's original subjects—go through more than one family breakup. As a result, the children of divorce never acquire what others unwittingly derive from years of home life: an "inner template" of how a committed husband and wife cooperate and play, fight and make up, and generally live out their lives as a couple.

So what should miserably married parents do? Wallerstein is no dogmatic opponent of divorce; she recounts here the harrowing experiences of a child whose chronically violent parents never thought of parting. But she also writes from a mature recognition that what is commonly called happiness is not everything. For those who can manage it, she therefore strongly urges that they remain married for the sake of the children. She holds up the example of a father who, "despite his own serious disappointments," struggled to care for his depressed and fearful wife and to protect his children. In a memorable conversation with his son, then in junior high school, this father was candid about the choices he had made, conveying, as Wallerstein puts it, "a world in which the values of honesty, patience, working at life's problems, love, and loyalty shine like beacons."

Wallerstein's critics have objected that her work does not meet the rigorous standards of social science. If what they want is knowledge derived from replicable experiments, they are right. But human histories are not like that. No two marriages or children are the same, nor can it be proved how a given child of divorce would have fared had his parents stayed married. On the other hand, Wallerstein's cases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put flesh on the bones of what researchers have long told us: that many forms of pathology—trouble at school, delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, early sexual activity, unwed parenthood, marital instability, and so on—occur at higher rates among children of divorce than among children of intact families.

For those who prefer such quantifiable truths, Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher's *The Case for Marriage* provides a veritable mountain of evidence. Gallagher, the wordsmith of the pair, is an author and newspaper columnist who has written widely on marriage. Waite, by contrast, is a newcomer to this controversial field. A former president of the Population Association of America and immediate past chairman of the family section of the American Sociological Association, she stumbled onto her subject a few years back while doing work on mortality rates for the National Institutes of Health.

Demographers have long known that married people live longer. But Waite was struck by the sheer magnitude of the difference, and especially by the "amazingly large survival advantage enjoyed by married men." All else being equal, she found, nine out of ten married men alive at age forty-eight would be alive at sixty-five. For never-married men, by contrast, the figure was six out of ten, and divorced and widowed men were barely better off.

Inquiring further, Waite discovered that scattered social scientists in numerous specialties had documented the edge married people enjoy in physical and mental health, income, wealth, sexual satisfaction, the risk of being victims of crime, and happiness in general. Intrigued, she set out to assemble the most methodologically sound studies. The resulting book, with its 50 pages of footnotes and bibliography, cites these findings and explores the reasons behind them.

Take the matter of married men's greater longevity. While allowing that "selection bias" may be part of the explanation—that is, the possibility that married men are healthier because healthier men marry in the first place—Waite reports that "even sick people who marry live longer than their counterparts who don't." Other studies show that adults generally, when married, drink and smoke less, keep more regular hours, eat better, and get more sleep. Companionship is good for health, but married companionship is best; the boost that single people get when they move in with others is smaller than the one for single people who marry.

And then there is wealth. It is well known that divorce impoverishes, but Waite contends that "being married in itself seems to encourage the creation and retention of wealth." Some of the reasons are obvious. Two can live more cheaply than one—and the division of labor in most marriages means that two are more productive together than apart. People also tend to be more careful about money when they have a spouse to answer to, and a spouse and children to answer for. Finally, marriage changes the economic behavior not only of the married but also of their kin: married couples more often receive help from extended family.

Waite also demolishes a number of the "post-marriage myths" now commonly invoked to disparage the institution. Most illuminating in this connection is what she has to say about "spouse abuse." "Domestic violence," Waite writes, "is perhaps the only area in which social scientists casually use the term 'husband' to mean any or all of the following: the man one is married to, the man one used to be married to, the man one lives with, the man one is merely having sex with, and/or the man one used to have sex with." It is a neat technique, she observes, for masking the ideologically unacceptable fact that "only a tiny fraction of marriages become violent" and married women are at the *lowest* risk for domestic abuse.

LIKE JUDITH Wallerstein, Linda Waite deems marital stability an important public good and suggests ways we might help to reestablish the cultural centrality of marriage. Their several recommendations range from Waite's call for improving our "disgraceful" national system for gathering data on the subject to Wallerstein's insistence that courts adopt "a more realistic view of the postdivorce family," attending not just to the wishes of parents but to the long-term needs of children. Useful as these recommendations are, however, they are perhaps not as important in the end as the broader contribution made by these two fine books—powerful antidotes, both of them, to the destructive and still astonishingly widespread view that marriage is just one "lifestyle" option among many, and that all "intimate relationships" are interchangeable.

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"A State which is incompetent to satisfy different races condemns itself; a State which labors to neutralize, to absorb or to expel them, destroys its own vitality; a State which does not include them is destitute of the chief basis of self-government."

These are the words of Lord Acton, the British historian and moralist, written more than a century ago. How clearly they apply to the Balkan states and in particular to Serbia. And how clearly they apply to other parts of the world with conflicting nationalisms.

Lord Acton was writing when the Balkans were the powder keg of Europe and when what was happening between the expiring Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria, its vassal state, engaged the statesmen of Europe. Today the statesmen of Europe, this time with the support of the United States and NATO, are trying in the name of the United Nations to stop war-crime killings in the territories of what was once Yugoslavia. Will the new Yugoslavia permit a nationalist-driven Albanian population to create an independent Kosovo?

Lord Acton's words lead to a question of some importance to existing states: **Was the UN condemnation of Serbia based on the vague, undefined notion that every "nation" has a right to its own state?** Corsica, a French island in the Mediterranean, wants independence. There is an independence movement in northern Spain among the Basques. The population of Acheh in faraway Sumatra has been seeking independence from Indonesia for more than half a century. Does Tibet, a victim of communist imperialism, have a right to independence from China? Will Sri Lanka allow the Tamil Tigers to form their own country? Are these legitimate claims?

These claims to "independence" have proven one thing: Marx and Engels didn't know what they were talking about when they wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* that "national differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing. ...The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still further." Tell that to the Chechens.

Nationalism (or subnationalism) has been the major political "growth industry" since the end of World War II, although its modern origins go back to the mid-nineteenth century. Whereas there were fifty-one signatories to the original UN Charter back in 1945, today's UN membership numbers 190, and more are surely coming, among them ministates with no visible means of support.

Alan Bullock has defined nationalism as "a mass emotion [which] has been the most powerful political force in the history of the modern world." How to deal with that mass emotion will be the real task of the twenty-first century. Prague showed one way to do it: when Slovakia wanted to secede from Czechoslovakia it did so peacefully. Will Montenegro be allowed by Yugoslavia's new leadership to secede peacefully from Serbia? The Western concept of nation was well summarized by Edmund Burke: "A nation is a moral essence, not a geographical arrangement."

Who's the next "moral essence"?

— Arnold Beichman

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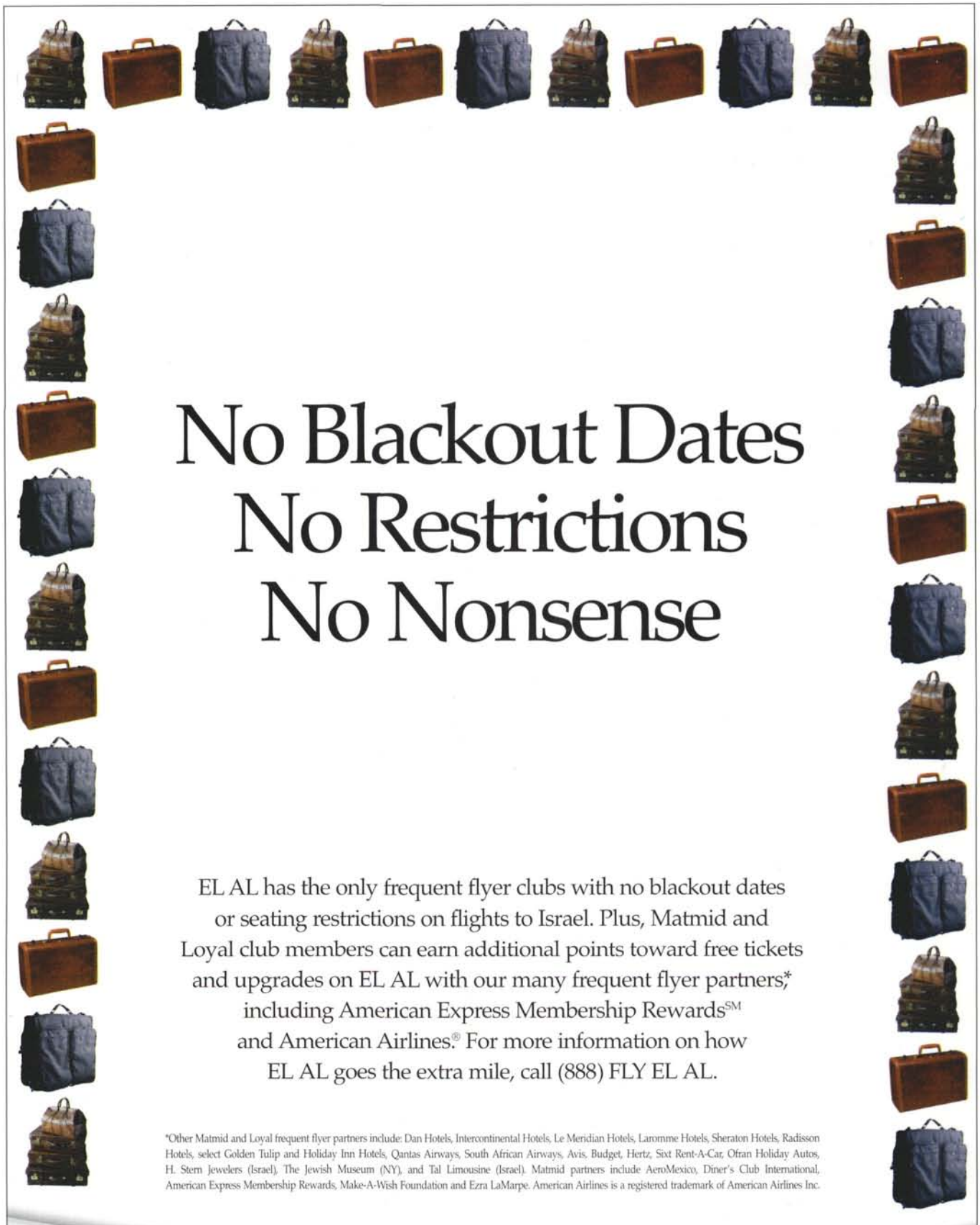

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